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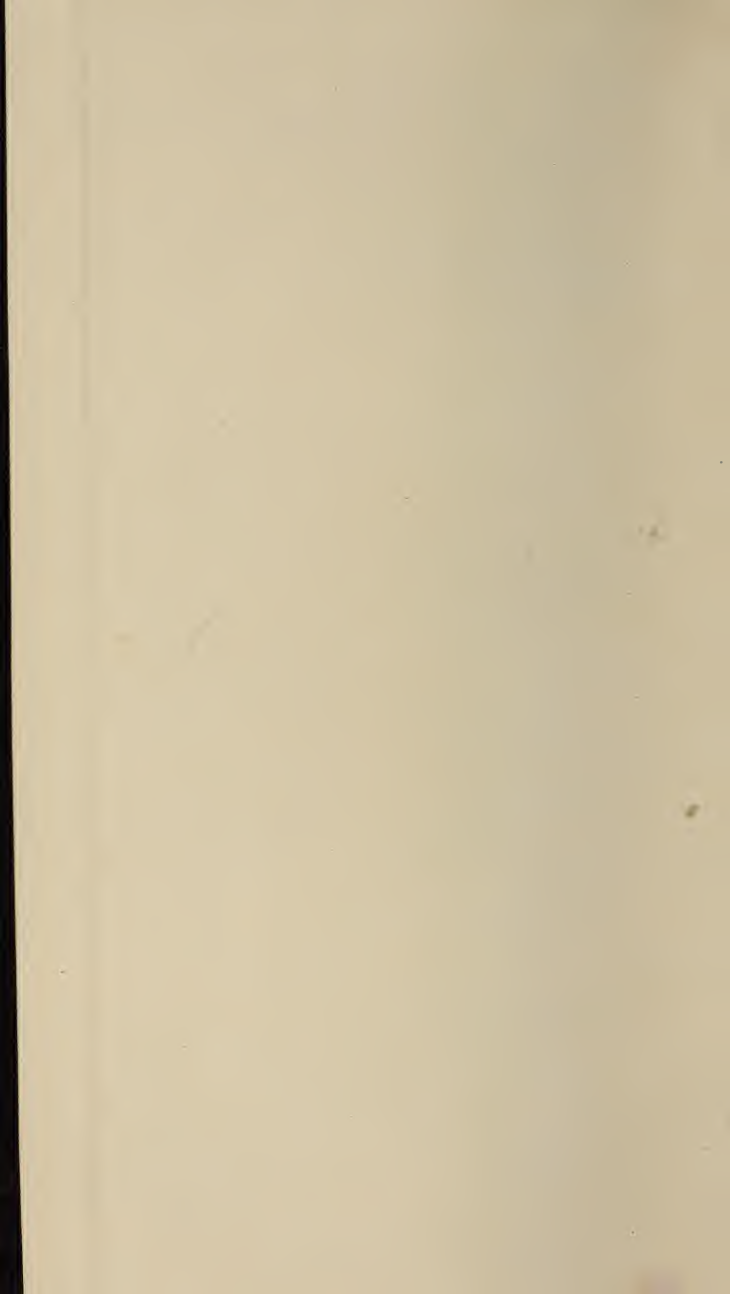
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AN INQUIRY
INTO THE
SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY
FOR

Social Worship :

WITH
OBSERVATIONS ON ITS REASONABLENESS
AND UTILITY ;

AND
AN ACCOUNT OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE
RELIGIOUS SERVICES OF THE TEMPLE AT
JERUSALEM, AND OF THE SYNA-
GOGUE, WERE CONDUCTED IN
THE TIME OF CHRIST.

By THOMAS MOORE.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

SOLD BY R. HUNTER, 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD ; AND
DAVID EATON, 187, HIGH-HOLBORN.

1821.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Treatise originated in the expression of some doubts respecting the authority derived from the Scriptures for Social Worship by individuals whom the Writer knew to be persons of real integrity and conscientious Christians ; doubts which were occasioned by recent publications on the subject. It consists of the substance of three Sermons, designed chiefly to afford those who heard them the means of forming a correct judgement concerning the degree of encouragement given to this practice by the New Testament especially : the result of the investigation necessary for this purpose was increased surprise that any dispute should ever have arisen on the subject. Several friends were of opinion that this little work is calculated to be useful ; and it is in conformity with their advice that it is now published. Though there is not the slightest probability that any efforts to restrain the exercise of our

social affections and capacities in rendering united homage to the supreme and universal Benefactor, will ever be followed by extensive and permanent effects, yet as far as they do succeed, the advocates for public worship cannot but consider them as highly injurious, since they appear to strike at the root of the influence of religion on society at large. The well known maxim "*obsta principiis*" holds good in religion and morals not less than in medicine; and, however limited may be the probable extension of what appears to us to be pernicious error, strenuous and persevering exertions in any cause will usually obtain considerable success. To throw what check we can, therefore, upon the early progress of such error, is an attempt the design of which at least will meet with approbation. Others have written with great ability in defence of social worship; but a new publication on the subject, occasioned by new circumstances, may possibly be read by some individuals to whom it may be useful, when the former, whatever be their merits, are laid aside.

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AN INQUIRY
INTO THE
SANCTION GIVEN BY THE SCRIPTURES
TO
Social Worship :
&c.

CHAPTER I.

ARGUMENTS FROM REASON IN FAVOUR OF
SOCIAL WORSHIP.

SECTION I.

Explanations. The universal Practice of Christians.

WORSHIP is reverence, homage, adoration, in whatever way expressed. It has a civil as well as religious application, or is used to denote the honour rendered either to man or his Creator. Its former signification is now become in a great measure obsolete, and the use of it is preserved only by ancient institutions; but, being common in the time when the authorized version of the Scriptures was made, it occurs repeatedly in that

translation, as in Matth. ix. 18, xviii. 26, Luke xiv. 10^a, and Acts x. 25. In its religious sense it is applied very generally to any external homage rendered to God, as in Matth. iv. 9 and 10; and as in John iv. 21—24, to the union of external homage with the genuine spirit of devotion by which all religious services that are acceptable to Him, must be accompanied. In 1 Chron. xxix. 20, it is used in both its meanings; “And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and *worshiped* the LORD and the king.”

It is observable however, that in its religious application this word is used in the Scriptures most commonly to express that divine adoration which is public and social^b.

Worship is the generic term; Prayer is a specific mode of religious homage, and in its more extended sense includes adoration, thanksgiving, confession and petition; but its strict and proper signification is limited to the latter: it is more-

^a Though the original word in the last of these three passages is very different from that which occurs in the two former, the translators have rendered it *worship*, as at that time expressing the meaning of it with sufficient clearness: “Then shalt thou have worship (honour) in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.”

^b In the law of Moses there are no directions respecting prayer; but the ancient as well as modern Jews, according to Maimonides, understood the command (Deut. x. 12) “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, &c.” to signify prayer, including adoration, praise and supplication. See Vitranga de Syn. Vet. lib. iii. pars ii. cap. xiv. pag. 1031; and Selden’s Works, vol. i. lib. iii. cap. iii. pag. 286.

over remarkable, that the prayers recorded in the Scriptures, and particularly the Lord's prayer, consist chiefly of petition.

Prayer may be divided into mental and oral. Oral prayer, or the uttering of the devout sentiments of the mind aloud, may indeed be private; but, as the nature of it implies, it is usually social.

In the following pages we are to inquire, Whether or not the practice of social prayer is decidedly sanctioned by the Scriptures, and particularly those of the New Testament. That it is, to me appears unquestionable; and such has uniformly been the opinion of the great body of Christian professors in all ages. From the time of the apostles to the present day; among those who have been taught in the school of Christ, whatever form of church government and religious discipline they may have adopted, or whatever systems of doctrine they may have received as true; whether Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, or Baptists; whether Trinitarians or Unitarians, Arians, Socinians, Sabellians, Lutherans, or Calvinists; of whatever name or denomination; among them all, social prayer has universally prevailed. This is one of those subjects respecting which there has been the least controversy. Upon other points of faith and practice, in a great majority of instances, relative to the Christian religion, the most violent and perpetual contentions have arisen, of which some have

issued in persecutions but little inferior in bitterness and ferocity to those by which the progress of Christianity was at first marked in lines of blood by Pagan jealousy and superstition; nor can perfect, absolute uniformity of opinion, on any topic of discussion, be expected, whilst human nature remains what it is. But here, amongst those who have been the most intrepid opponents of the established systems of the day, as well as the advocates of those systems themselves, through all the contentions by which the Christian world has been agitated from the beginning, there has been, and is still, as near an approach to unanimity as the history of ecclesiastical affairs can supply. The practice of social prayer has been as general as the belief in a providence, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgement of the world.—How is this circumstance to be accounted for?

Reasoning upon a principle universally admitted, where is the cause of this great, extensive, and permanent effect among Christians of every name, if social prayer receive no sanction from the religion of Jesus Christ? How comes it to pass, that all parties of Christians, however wide have been their differences on other subjects, and however bitter their animosities, have agreed here in so far mistaking the nature of their Master's instructions, and the design of his religion, as to adopt universally a practice which he himself disapproved, if he did not absolutely forbid?

The corruptions of Christianity have all been traced to their sources, and their progress has been described with sufficient correctness; but where is the origin of social worship among the followers of Christ, if it be not found in the Scriptures, and how can the history of its progress be separated from that of the Christian religion?

We know, indeed, it has lately been affirmed—and but lately by professed Christians—that all this mischief, as it is considered, is to be attributed to priestcraft; to the more than magic influence of hireling, ambitious, designing, hypocritical, interested, bigoted, fanatical priests, who, if public worship, or social prayer, were not in use, would lose the craft from which their gains are extracted; but who, as ecclesiastical affairs are now managed, make a trade of religion sufficiently profitable. But what does this supposition imply? In the first place, that men who possess superior means of moral and intellectual improvement, and who, generally at least, are in the habit of making considerable use of the advantages which they enjoy; who are consequently distinguished above other classes of the community by their mental acquisitions; whose stated occupation moreover is calculated to employ their attention constantly on the nature and obligations of moral and religious duties, and who are therefore usually allowed to possess habits of general integrity;—that these men, thus gifted and thus distinguished by religious advantages and in-

Intellectual endowments, many of whom also deservedly hold the highest stations in the scientific and literary world, in this instance conspire to render themselves deserving of universal abhorrence and contempt by practising the grossest of all impositions on mankind; by assuming the profession of religion in its most sacred form, as a cloak to cover the basest of purposes, which in comparatively few instances can have any rational hope of success, in a worldly view, worth regarding. Even among the ministers of "the church established by law," the number is a minority, who can have any well grounded hope of really bettering their temporal circumstances by assuming an office directly opposed to every thing that is hypocritical and sordid. And among Dissenters, the opponents of the established systems of faith and discipline, who is there that does not know, that of all schemes for worldly advancement, that of assuming the office of religious teacher is one of the most hopeless? How few are the instances of the profits of the profession affording a compensation at all adequate to the labour and talents that are necessary to success! If there be instances of this kind, so limited is their number as to supply no motive sufficiently powerful to influence the conduct of men possessing common discernment and common discretion. And for the great body of dissenting ministers, who is so ignorant of their situation as not to admit, that there is not the slightest prospect of temporal emolument and

worldly gain from their employment? Who can doubt, that, whilst the same abilities and the same industry exerted in other professions, or in trade and commerce, would be productive of far more comfortable and even independent circumstances, a large proportion of them devote their lives, if not to penury and distress, at least to the miseries of dependence; and dependence too of the worst kind; the dependence of one, whose office and education ought to render him the superior, upon many, whose limited knowledge and variety of tempers, prejudices, interests and failings, will frequently render his situation in a worldly view truly deplorable? Such then are the allurements which are held out to men of sense as the barter for conscience,—the pay for the prostitution of their principles and their talents, whatever they may be. It is for this that persons who have greatly superior advantages for intellectual and religious improvement, and whose habits are necessarily on the side of morality, are supposed by the imputation to render themselves the basest of characters, and by the constant practice of religious imposition to become as despicable for their weakness and folly as for their total want of integrity! None can believe that to be the case with large bodies of mankind but those whose discernment is annihilated by their prejudices, or bigoted attachment to favourite opinions.

Again: What does the supposition that the whole Christian world has been hitherto deluded

by priestcraft, or the interested bigotry of priests, into the practice of social prayer, imply, but, in the second place, that the people themselves are as blind, as ignorant, or as criminal, in submitting to religious imposition, as their ministers are unprincipled and weak in carrying it into practice? The satire falls as severely upon the one as the other; and goes to show, that from the earliest ages of Christianity until now, they who have been taught have as little understanding and integrity as those who have been employed to teach; that the great body of Christians have as yet been, and still are, either knaves or dupes, or both; and that the number who may take it for granted that they alone are possessed of sense and principle united, is so small as scarcely to be perceptible. What moreover do the people gain by the imposition? Do they receive payment for giving it encouragement and support by their example and attendance? or are they universally contributing to the maintenance of what by opening the New Testament they might easily know to be the grossest deception? Our opinion of mankind however is not sunk thus low; and we consequently infer, that the universal agreement of Christians, in all ages, in favour of social prayer, explicitly declared as it is by their practice, is a presumptive argument of no inconsiderable force in its support, as a practice equally approved by reason and the Scriptures. The whole current coin of a country cannot be counterfeit, neither can the uniform

and universal practice of Christians originate in fraud, and total ignorance of the Scriptures.

It will still however be said, and why should it not? that we have the Bible, containing the rule of faith and duty, in our hands, and by examining the Scriptures for ourselves, as we have an unquestionable right and as it is our duty to do, we can discover whether or not social prayer is a practice which Christ and his apostles approved and encouraged. By this test we have not the slightest objection that the question should be tried, and have no fear for the result.

Previously however to entering upon this inquiry, the reasonableness and utility of social prayer have some claim upon our attention, as well as the practice of the ancient church of God under the Mosaic dispensation.

SECTION II.

The Reasonableness and Utility of Social Worship.

On this part of the subject I shall beg leave, in the first place, to remind the reader of the just remark, that the Christian religion is the religion of nature explained, illustrated, extended, and enforced by higher sanctions and by motives more powerful and efficacious. In the former there is nothing inconsistent with the latter; and if there were, it could not be true; for as the light of reason is as much the gift of God for the direction of

his accountable creatures as revelation, they cannot be opposed to each other. Were there any thing in Christianity inconsistent with reason, then Christianity would be an irrational religion, and consequently would be unfit for man, who is a rational being. We have in fact no means of ascertaining, whether the religion of the New Testament be true or false but the use of reason; and, with whatever contempt and ingratitude some persons may speak of this first, best fruit of their Creator's beneficence, it is by this faculty alone that they themselves do in fact judge of the nature of the doctrines and duties which the gospel inculcates, as well as of the other evidences of its divine origin^a. Hence it follows, If we can prove that social prayer is a reasonable practice, then it is at least consistent with the Christian religion, and ought to be used.

^a We are told, indeed, that the Scriptures cannot be understood without the assistance of the holy spirit, or supernatural illumination; and on this subject the following comparison has been used: What benefit would you derive, it has been asked, from the contents of a book which you have never read, in a room perfectly dark? But in the state of this dark room is the human mind by nature with respect to religion; so that reason, according to this assertion, affords no light whatever on religious topics essential to salvation. This surely is treating this valuable gift of God with sufficient contempt and ingratitude. However, the present is not a proper opportunity for discussing this question. I shall only observe, that a Brothers, a Southcott, and a Huntington, with a thousand other fanatics, have laid equal claim to divine illumination with the whole race of popular preachers of this or former periods, and with equal proof of the justice of their pretensions. What evidence have we, either in the one case or the other, of the

With the view, then, of establishing this point, let it be observed in the first place, that public worship and social prayer are perfectly consistent with the social nature and circumstances of man, in conjunction with the relation which connects him with his Creator, and the obligations under which he is laid to divine beneficence.

“Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?” Was not the favourite notion of our great Master concerning “his God and our God,” that of the Universal Parent,—“his Father and our Father?” And was not this the character in which the apostles, his immediate successors in the great work of propagating the gospel, in their discourses and epistles delighted chiefly to present him to the confidence and veneration of mankind? And are there any persons now professing Christianity, who retain the ancient Jewish prejudice, and adopt opinions which represent the all-beneficent Creator, God who is love, as exercising the attributes of father towards

existence of such a gift, but the assertion of those who tell us they possess it? We respect the claims of the apostles to supernatural influence and divine illumination, because they wrought miracles in proof that they were thus highly favoured above the rest of mankind. Let others give the like evidence of the same exalted privilege, and we will treat them with equal deference and respect. But we are not willing to receive their own assertion merely for proof, well knowing how easy and how common it is for men to mistake the workings of their own imagination and their feelings for supernatural influences; and that there is no absurdity, however gross, that may not be, and in fact that has not been, promulgated under this common and always popular pretence of divine illumination.

those only who become proselytes to their system of faith, and whose religious feelings and experience are similar to their own,—to a highly favoured few,—to the elect alone? When will they learn, that the just and liberal dispensation of the gospel is “glad tidings to all people,” and owns no distinction marked with the slightest partiality, but affirms “with God is no respect of persons?” “Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles? Yes; of the Gentiles also.” Such is the language equally of reason and of the Scriptures. Is there not then a reasonableness, a fitness, a propriety, and even a loveliness, which every mind not dead to moral sensibility must recognise, in the offspring of this common Parent assembling together to express in unison their grateful sense of obligation to his bounty, their mutual dependence on his universal care, and the need which they all have alike of his paternal support and favour? May not the rich and poor meet together before Him who is the maker of them all, and with the utmost suitability and decorum give utterance to those sentiments of filial veneration and love which it is the duty of all to cultivate, as well as to offer their united prayers for those qualifications especially which are necessary to fit them for the enjoyment of his blessing?

Again: Who will deny that there is a universal participation of similar feelings, as well as wants and infirmities common to all, the natural

and proper expression of which is strictly social, and such as the virtuous and the good at least in the performance of religious as well as other duties will be readily impelled to exercise in conjunction with their fellow dependents on almighty power and beneficence? Is it not true, that, in various essential particulars, the Creator "hath fashioned the hearts of all men alike," and that consequently "as face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man?" Notwithstanding the vast difference in sentiments and ability which is the necessary result of different degrees of moral and intellectual improvement, together with difference of constitution, still the leading features of the human mind are always radically the same; and as mankind in general, by their original conformation, are uniformly disposed to be put into life and action by the same springs, or to be animated by the like motives, so the modes of expression suited to their common sentiments and affections are at once similar and also social. Hence arise not only a sympathy and reciprocation of thought and feeling, which are understood and recognised by all, but a propensity to unite with others in giving utterance to what we think and feel. Without having recourse to innate principles, and admitting the existence of considerable variety in the different mental as well as bodily constitutions of men, and also that both the existence and modification of the moral sensibilities and habits of all depend on the education they receive and the ope-

ration of the circumstances through which they pass, under the direction of the great First Cause, yet in every human mind there is, in different degrees, the same propensity to gratitude for benefits received; the moral sense, or the capacity of perceiving the distinction between what is right and wrong in conduct, together with compunction and remorse for what is believed to be inconsistent with duty; there is, however it may be suppressed by the prevalence of vice, a similar admiration and love of benevolence and virtue, and the desire at least, almost annihilated as it may be in some instances, of carrying them into effect. And, as inseparably connected with these, who will deny that the religious principle, or the direction of the best affections and sentiments towards his Supreme Benefactor, is also natural to man? Or if any one should deny this, would not the history of all nations immediately refute the calumny? All we know of mankind combines to show, that no principle is more evidently general, as certainly none is more powerful in its operation, than this. Religion, moreover, when pure and uncontaminated—unfortunately too seldom the case—by superstition and bigoted attachment to human creeds, is of all principles the most benevolent and social. He that loveth God, will necessarily love his brother also. Benevolence, or love to God and man, is the essence of true religion; and the more its influence prevails, the stronger will be the inclination of which every one will be conscious, to

unite with others in giving utterance to their common sentiments of gratitude to the common Benefactor; their penitence for transgressions of his will; and their humble but earnest desire of whatever may be calculated to render them the fit objects of his favour,—to give dignity, usefulness, and value to their being. Will not such a practice prove as acceptable an offering to God as it is congenial with the best feelings and propensities of men? Why then, in the name of common sense, must these feelings and propensities be suppressed? If their existence be not endangered, why must their influence be greatly impaired by consigning them altogether to silence and retirement? For what purpose, moreover, was the faculty of speech bestowed, but to express the sentiments of the heart? And where is the use of this faculty, if not in society? In what again consists spiritual or mental prayer, but in the devout affections and desires of the mind addressed to God? And if it be right to cultivate such affections and desires, how can it be wrong to express them? If devotional sentiments are felt in society, what just reason can be given why they should not be uttered in society? And what tribute of gratitude can be more worthy of a rational being in the relation in which he stands to his supreme Benefactor and his best friend? If, in every thing else that is virtuous and good, man is allowed to be social and communicative, why in his devotions must he be required to di-

vest himself of his social nature, and become altogether recluse and solitary? If there be any who can say they have no religious principles in common with their fellow men; no benefits to be thankful for, no sins to confess, no wants to be supplied, like the rest of their species; no feelings of sympathy, no sentiments of devotion in which others may participate; then let them refuse to unite with others in the delightful employment of rendering the social tribute of gratitude and veneration where it is most due, and of making known their wants and requests, together with thanksgiving, to Him who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. We will enter thy courts with thanksgiving, and thy gates with praise. We will give thanks at the remembrance of thy holiness. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker; let us call upon the name of Jehovah, for he is our God; we are his people and the work of his hands."

In the second place, will it be denied, that public social prayer is highly beneficial, that it tends to produce the best fruits of morality and practical religion? or will it be maintained, that it is calculated to do more harm than good? To me at least it appears that the prevalence of religion depends upon its observance, and that without it the influence of Christianity upon society would gradually decay, and in the end become annihi-

lated. Others may think differently ; but we are thankful that we live in an age when the liberty of every one to express his convictions in decent language on religious topics, without restraint and without censure, is admitted. Misrepresentation and abuse, the remaining fruits of the spirit of persecution and bigotry, may continue to exist ; but if fire, faggot, and the sword, have no power to silence what appears to be the voice of truth, reproach and calumny certainly will not have this effect. They may greatly injure, but can render no benefit to the cause which they are intended to assist.

To the beneficial tendency and high importance of private prayer we give a ready assent : without it, the genuine and habitual influence of religion on the life can scarcely be supposed to exist. Nothing certainly can be more remote from ostentation than real devotion ; humility is essential to its existence, and its principal source at least will always be found in reflection and communion with the Father of spirits, and with our own hearts, when secluded from the world : one of the most valuable benefits of public prayer arises from its tendency to promote that which is private.

As both however have their peculiar advantages, so each of them is liable to defects and tendencies to evil peculiar to itself. Private devotion may be more free ; less subject to restraint ; better adapted to individual feelings, wants, and experience, and not at all liable to suspicions of

deceit and ostentation. But it is also in danger of becoming enthusiastic on the one hand, or destitute of fervour and animation on the other. The thoughts may wander, and the affections grow cold and indifferent. At any rate, its good effects will be confined to one individual. Public prayer is more limited in its subjects, and may have less of personal interest; and, what is far worse, it may also degenerate into parade and hypocritical formality, and may thus become a cloak for some of the worst of vices: but at the same time its salutary influence is more general and extensive; its effect will probably be greater; it is calculated to afford more encouragement and strength to religious principle, and especially to cherish the true spirit of general sympathy and fraternal affection, which Christ appointed to be the test by which his followers should be known^a.

Who can be a stranger to the influence of society upon his feelings and his motives? Who that has any sensibility at all, does not know that some of his best emotions are more powerful in company than when alone? Who is not aware that attention is kept alive, the memory and all the faculties of the mind roused into action, by the presence of others, when in solitude they would become torpid and dull? And who can be ignorant especially, that by the union and concurrence of the friends of the same cause, unani-

^a John xiii. 35.

mously engaged in the same occupation, his own mind receives additional encouragement, firmness and support? Why should this advantage be denied to religious exercises whilst it is allowed to those of any other description? When engaged in company with his brethren of mankind in presenting to the universal Parent and Benefactor their humble but sincere offering of adoration, thanksgiving, and supplication, every one must be sensible that his devotional sentiments experience a considerable accession of vigour and activity; his faith becomes more powerful in its influence; the satisfaction he derives from the consolations and hopes of Christianity is more lively and exhilarating; his devotedness to God and his service, more cheerful and complete. But above all, the principle of benevolence and Christian charity towards all men can scarcely fail to be drawn forth into its greatest energy and extent, by the union of many in the social exercises of spiritual and true worship, rendered to that Being who is love itself, who stands in the same relation to all, and whose blessing, like the dew which falls equally on the neglected shrub and the stately oak, descends and rests, without distinction, on every upright worshiper. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one religious profession, one God and Father of all; the same Christian principles and hopes; the same rule of conduct, and the same glorious expectation of everlasting union and felicity in the like employments of be-

nevolence, intelligence, and devotion in a better state, are the common property of Christians; and when their attention is employed in company with each other by social prayer on these general objects of their religious profession regularly and frequently, dead to the common sympathies of human nature must that mind be, which does not find itself warmed by more fervent affection towards those especially who are engaged in the same reverential worship, drawn into closer connexion with them, and prompted to take a stronger interest in their welfare; nor will the same cause operate less favourably on the disposition and behaviour towards the rest of mankind. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! A day spent in thy courts is better than a thousand." The house of prayer at least is the abode of peace and love. If contention and discord naturally result in Christian churches from disputation and difference of opinion, the work of social prayer and praise is surely calculated to allay animosities, and to banish antichristian dispositions from those societies who engage in it from pure motives and with right conceptions of its nature.

Social prayer, then, has an admirable tendency to give effect to Christian principles and doctrines. The whole system of moral and religious duties is easily understood, nor are the leading and essential truths of Christianity above the comprehension of the humblest capacity. The difficulty

is not to communicate to men in general a knowledge of what is essential to their highest welfare in this world and the next, so much as to give practical efficacy to the moral and religious principles with which they are perfectly familiar. It is this indeed that calls for all the skill and all the exertion of Christian teachers, as every one who is honest and zealous in the profession must be well aware; namely, to induce those who hear them to be influenced and to live by the plain and simple rules and principles of the gospel, sublime, universally interesting, and all-important as they are. Social prayer is evidently one of those means which are admirably calculated to promote this great object. By withdrawing the attention from the anxious cares of life; by reducing the mind to a state of calmness, reflection, and solemnity; by cherishing and giving fresh strength to devout and benevolent affections, it is manifestly an excellent preparative for religious instruction, thus rendering the soil fit for the reception of the good seed of the word of God. It is indeed an instrument powerful in its operation; and though capable of perversion, like every thing else that is good, to purposes of mischief (and on this account serious is the responsibility of those who direct the use of it), still far greater good than evil will usually be the result of its general adoption. But where religious opinions are correctly Christian, and where social prayer is conducted with ability and judgment united to genuine devotion, the effect can

scarcely fail to prove not less salutary than powerful and permanent. Let any persons recollect how they have been influenced, when joining attentively in public worship thus conducted, and they are differently constituted surely from the rest of mankind, if they do not discover that the effect has been in the highest degree beneficial. For these reasons it has sometimes been remarked by persons who have united judgement and knowledge to religion and integrity, that the devotional parts of the public services in our places of worship are of more importance, because they give greater effect to religious and moral principles, than even the most persuasive religious instruction itself.

After all, will the objection still be urged, that persons who conduct or who join in social prayer, may and sometimes do, render this practice nothing better than a cloak for abominable wickedness? This is readily admitted, and the Pharisees are notorious instances. But to urge this circumstance as a proof that social prayer is neither rational nor useful, is evidently arguing from the abuse of the practice against the use of it; a mode of reasoning universally discarded. The same argument moreover may be employed, with equal force, against the profession of religion in any form and by any means whatever. But why is it not perceived, that the very objection itself admits the excellent tendency of social worship? They are the best things that are most liable to

abuse; and the very reason why deceivers find it convenient to take refuge in a public profession of religion by observing its forms, is, because those forms are perceived to be good in their tendency and effect. If public worship, including social prayer, were not known to be usually connected with real integrity and the moral principles which genuine religion requires, how would it be worth while for any persons to take up this practice as a covering for their vices? It can be only because social and public worship is acknowledged to be highly beneficial by producing habits of virtue and good conduct, that hypocrites find it convenient to hide their hollowness and depravity under its shelter and protection. Were not this the case, it would afford them no service.

“Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,
(And no man’s hatred ever wrong’d her yet,)
May claim this merit still—that she admits
The worth of what she mimics with such care^a.”

So evident indeed is the salutary influence of public worship in a moral view, that it is scarcely possible that persons who attend it with regularity, should not feel the obligation under which they are laid thereby to maintain a conversation worthy of their profession as followers of Christ, lest the odious stigma of pharisaical duplicity should fix itself upon them: nor is this a consideration of minor importance.

^a Cowper’s Task, book iii.

Private prayer is also liable to the worst abuse. It cannot be charged with ostentation; but it may be converted into a substitute for moral duties. A strict and regular performance of the private exercises of devotion may be made to serve as a sort of compromise for the most important virtues, and thus mint and rue and annis and cummin may be tithed even in secret, whilst the weightier matters of the law, as justice, temperance, and mercy, may be treated as of little worth. His conduct towards his God, the greatest of beings, such a person may possibly imagine, is alone of real importance; at least he may act as if this were the case; and if he perform with exactness and fervour his duties to his Maker, he may feel but little concern in what manner he conducts himself towards creatures so insignificant, in his estimation, as mortals. He may feel no hesitation in acting as if religion had nothing to do with the affairs of the world, or with trade; and thus petty fraud, falsehood and imposition, or other vices, may be found in company with the religious observances of the closet, not less than of the church, the meeting, or the chapel.

But the personal and social duties of a moral kind;—are they also free from all danger of similar perversion and abuse? An individual, for instance, who is sufficiently exact in discharging the obligations of common honesty, may think himself excused from attending to the demands of charity: hence he may be hard of heart, brutal in his

manners, subject to violent anger, and altogether destitute of Christian benevolence. "Am I my brother's keeper? I pay every one his own, and what more can be required of me? If others are suffering distress, that is no concern of mine,—charity begins at home." And thus also even charity itself may serve, in the worst sense, to cover a multitude of sins. In short, we well know that any religious and moral duty is liable to be substituted for others; and it is our business to take care that we be not seduced into the neglect of any useful and excellent custom by the consideration only of its abuse and perversion to evil purposes. As well might we nauseate the food that is necessary to life, or reject the moderate use of wholesome beverage, because there are those who injure their health, their character and their circumstances, by intemperance, as refuse to join with others in any religious service, because there are hypocrites, who make it a substitute for integrity, justice and humanity.

But there is one circumstance of considerable importance relative to social worship, which remains to be taken notice of; and that is, the effect which it is calculated to have upon the minds of those who are not in the habit of prayer at all, and who are as yet strangers to the practical influence of religion entirely; children, for instance, and young persons. Is it true, that upon their minds especially, example and custom have greater influence than precept? And are they taught only to pray, whilst they see no instance

of the performance of this duty in others? Will they not be in danger at least of slighting the precept, and following the example of neglect, in private as well as public? Undoubtedly it is in the regular and stated offices of devotion in society, that their habits of religion, if formed at all, must have their source.

Again: How large is the number of persons who live in Christian countries and are called by the Christian name, but who are in the habit of neglecting the duties of private as well as public devotion altogether! By what means are such individuals to be induced to attend constantly to the practice of the duties they owe to God, which are in truth the only sure foundation of all other duties, if public worship, including social prayer, be totally laid aside? Would religious instruction be sufficient? To me at least it appears that it would not. Prayer is not, and cannot be made the habitual or frequent topic of public discussion; whereas the constant practice of social worship, whilst it is admirably calculated to give the best effect to sentiments of devotion and benevolence, and to prepare the mind for the reception of moral instruction, is well adapted also to the production of religious habits in retirement; and thus many a sinner who entered the house of worship with a design to scoff, has not left it till he has learned to pray.

From all these considerations, therefore, we conclude that few customs are more important than that of public worship; and that if it were

entirely to cease, private devotion would lose its influence, and the world in general would have little if any religion whatever.

I have only to add on this part of the subject, that the good effect of social prayer will probably be greater on the mind of the person who conducts the service, or who delivers the prayers, than of those who hear and silently join with him in this duty. Hence those forms of public worship in which all Christians are actually employed, in this respect at least, have considerable advantage, whatever may be their defects on other accounts. Though much learning may be necessary to understand thoroughly some parts of the Scriptures that have given rise to controversy, all that is essential to salvation is extremely plain and intelligible; and certainly every one who understands the gospel is not only at liberty to teach it, but by endeavouring to instruct others he will adopt an excellent method of learning and of improving himself. So also meetings for social prayer, as well as religious instruction, in which all who are competent alternately conduct the devotions of others, will be found to be attended with the most important benefit. Our Methodist brethren, as their conduct shows, are fully sensible of this; and there can be no doubt that one of the chief causes of their astonishing and rapid success, is the universality and the frequency of their meetings for social prayer upon this plan.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEGREE OF ENCOURAGEMENT GIVEN TO SOCIAL PRAYER BY THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

SECTION I.

The Practice of the Jews, under the Mosaic Dispensation, relative to this Subject.

HAVING shown the reasonableness, excellent tendency and great importance, of public worship, or social prayer, in a moral as well as religious view, we are now to inquire into the degree of support and encouragement which this practice derives from the Scriptures; and that it should be made a question at all, whether the sanction which it receives from these invaluable guides to truth and duty, be fully satisfactory or not, to me at least, after careful investigation, appears to be matter of surprise.

On this part of the subject, the first topic that presents itself is the practice of the Israelites during the several periods of their history as a nation. And it is to the purpose to remark that, though in a variety of important instances the Mosaic dispensation was essentially different from the Christian, and inferior to it, because it was adapted in these instances exclusively to that sin-

gular people, and to times and circumstances materially different from ours, still it was founded upon principles common to all men; for it is evident that the worship which it authorized was not only public but social, and, as we shall be able to prove, even social prayer was a practice with which the ancient Jews were familiar, and to which in the time of Christ especially they had been long and universally accustomed. Nor is this circumstance of inferior importance; for it is a remark upon which the opponents of social prayer lay considerable stress, that this practice is not sanctioned by any express command of Christ and his apostles; and the reply is, that so familiar were Christ and his apostles, as well as those whom they taught, with this excellent custom, and so little danger is there, whilst true religion prevails, and human nature continues what it is, that it should ever be laid aside, that they did not think it necessary to enforce the observance of it by a special injunction.

In the early ages of the world, of which we have any account, when mankind were most subject to the influence of the senses, the imagination, and the passions, sacrifices and ceremonial observances were modes of religious worship which generally prevailed; and these symbols of affectionate gratitude for benefits received, of penitence for acknowledged transgression, and of earnest desire of divine favour and acceptance, had their origin, no doubt, in the same sentiments

and feelings as gave rise to the custom of approaching their princes and distinguished benefactors, on all important occasions, with the most acceptable presents which their circumstances would allow. The Mosaic institute did nothing more with respect to sacrifices than regulate the use of a practice, which was adapted to the state of mankind at that time, and which had taken too strong a hold of their prejudices and habits to be eradicated without danger to their religion. But so far were offerings to God or man from precluding the use of prayers and petitions, either in the one case or the other, that the former appear to have been considered only as the fittest means of rendering the latter the more acceptable. Among the patriarchs and Jews, especially in the latter periods of their history, prayer and praises accompanied their sacrifices, and regularly formed a part of their social and public religious services. The principal signification of divine worship, adopted by general consent, is prayer; and that this is a signification of that expression, whether it relate to acts of public or private devotion, which frequently occurs in the Scriptures, is unquestionable. The following instances will serve to show how familiar the Jews always were with the practice of social worship in this sense.

In the patriarchal ages the modes of worship were as simple and unrestrained as possible. Heads of families, or tribes, chose any place for this purpose which they thought suitable, and

changed it continually, as, in the course of an unsettled and wandering life, they had occasion to change the place of their abode. Such, we find, was the case with the Father of the faithful. Wherever Abraham resided, there he erected an altar, and there he statedly “called upon the name of the Lord,” prayer, as just observed, being a regular appendage of the sacrifice, and properly constituting the worship^a. Isaac followed the example of his father^b, as did Jacob also^c; for, when he fled from home through fear of his brother, he erected the stone on which he slept as a memorial of the vision which he had seen, and made a solemn vow, that, if he should return in safety, this should be God’s house (Bethel); and accordingly after his return he erected an altar there, and of course called upon the name of the Lord, according to the custom of his fathers; and wherever sacrifice and prayer were offered, there God was supposed to dwell. Now it is evident from the circumstances of the case, that these altars were not places of solitary worship only. Did these pious patriarchs suffer their fa-

^a See Gen. xii. 8. xiii. 4. xxi. 33. And when Abraham interceded for Sodom, it was probably at the stated place where he was accustomed to worship God. Compare Gen. xviii. 22 and 23 with xix. 27. Prayer at the time of sacrifice was also a common practice among Heathen nations, instances of which occur in Homer’s *Odyss.* lib. iii. 447, 450. xi. 34. xiv. 423, and in Virgil’s *Æn.* lib. xii. 175. vi. 247. The case of Elijah’s contest with the prophets of Baal presents an instance of both. 1 Kings xviii. 19.

^b Gen. xxvi. 25. ^c Gen. xxviii. 18—22. xxxv. 7—14.

milies and numerous dependants to live in total neglect of religion and its public duties? Certainly not. On the contrary it is mentioned as an honourable trait in Abraham's character, that he would take the necessary care that his children and his household should follow his own example of religious fidelity^a. These altars, then, were the places where the patriarchs worshiped God by prayer and sacrifice, not alone, but in company with the families or tribes of which they were the heads. They were the priests as well as rulers of their households.

After this period, when the children of Israel had become a numerous people, many instances occur in the Old Testament which prove that the worship of God in large assemblies was a practice to which they were accustomed.

In the 15th chapter of Exodus we are informed, that Moses himself and all the people united in a solemn act of devout thanksgiving, on the occasion of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage; nor is it matter of any consequence, that the prayer here recorded is called a song, or whether it were really sung, or recited in any other mode. It was unquestionably a social address to the one living and true God, expressing the fervent gratitude of the worshipers for recent salvation from the most cruel oppression, and their unreserved trust in his future protection; an address in which the whole congregation joined with their leader:

^a Gen. xviii. 19.

“Then sung Moses and *the children of Israel* this song unto Jehovah; and spake, saying, ‘I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation,’ &c.—‘Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?’” &c.

In Deut. xxxii. another solemn act of worship is recorded, which Moses conducted, and which was at least public, if not social; for it is said (ver. 44), “And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun.”

Joshua followed the example of his predecessor. Josh. vii. 6. After the Israelites had experienced a defeat from their enemies, “when the heart of the people melted, and became as water, Joshua rent his clothes before the ark of the Lord, he and the elders of Israel until the even-tide:” the prayer, or rather the substance of it, is given. It was an act of public supplication, in which the elders at least joined with Joshua.

In Judges x. 15, the children of Israel are represented as uniting in addressing a solemn confession of their sins to God, and in prayer for assistance, “And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, ‘We have sinned: do thou unto us what seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.’”

1 Sam. xii. 16, &c. we are informed that Samuel prayed, evidently in the presence of the people.

1 Chron. xxix. 10—13, David delivered an admirable prayer, consisting of thanksgiving and supplication, in a general assembly of the people : “Wherefore David blessed Jehovah before all the congregation, and David said, ‘Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel, our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty : for all that is in the heaven and the earth is thine ; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted to be head over all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all ; in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, *our* God, *we* thank thee, and praise thy glorious name,’” &c. This then, it appears from the plural form of the expression, was strictly a social prayer, consisting of adoration, thanksgiving and petition, delivered by David in the name of the people, and in which the people evidently joined. At the conclusion of it David said to all the congregation, “Now bless the Lord your God ; and all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers,” &c. Nor is this fact at all invalidated by the singular use which is here made of the word *worship*, both in its civil and religious meaning. It was after the people had united in this public act of social prayer, that they bowed down

their heads, and *worshipped* the LORD and the king. The external act was the same, but the disposition of mind was different, and the difference is easily understood.

It may be observed in addition, that this is an instance of public social prayer at a time when sacrifices were most in use, and the Mosaic ritual consequently in full authority; for "they sacrificed sacrifices unto the Lord on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel;" that is, besides the sacrifices presented by individuals.

In the 16th chapter of the same book we are informed that David appointed certain officers, whose stated employment it was to offer to God devout addresses of praise and thanksgiving; and this, it is added, they did continually; and of what consequence is it whether they were sung, or chanted, or spoken; or that they were accompanied by musical instruments? They were social acts of praise and prayer. And "David (ver. 4) appointed certain Levites, of whom Asaph was the chief, to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord." And immediately after follows an excellent specimen of devout thanksgiving which David composed on the occasion. "Then on that day David delivered first," or as the first instance after the appointment of these officers,

“this *psalm*,” or prayer, for the word *psalm*, which is in Italics, is not in the original, “to Asaph and his brethren.” The conclusion is, “Say ye, ‘Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.’ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said Amen, and praised the Lord.” The people therefore joined unanimously in these public acts of worship.

Solomon’s dedication of the Temple was also an instance of public devotion, and the account of it contains a prayer delivered by himself in a general assembly of the people; and though it is not said that the whole congregation added their *amen* at the conclusion, yet whenever a solemn prayer is thus addressed to God in a public assembly, those who are present are always considered as taking a part in the act, as it was perfectly natural and proper for them to do on this occasion. From the whole account, indeed, we can scarcely avoid inferring that the people concurred in this public act of worship. The praises also which were addressed to Jehovah at the conclusion of the service were at any rate perfectly social; for the singers lifted up their voices with the musical instruments and praised the Lord, saying, “For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.”

In the Psalms there are many instances adapt-

ed, and adapted only, to public social worship. They are evidently composed for the Temple service. In the 122d Psalm language is used which necessarily refers to a public and social act: "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.' Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem; whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." This language of course implies that the purpose for which the Israelites statedly assembled in the Temple was social worship in the sense of praise and prayer. Among many others the following were evidently composed for such occasions. Ps. lxxx. a part of which is as follows: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth. Turn *us* again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and *we* shall be saved. O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the *prayer of thy people*? Turn *us* again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine, and *we* shall be saved, &c. So shall *we* not go back from thee: quicken *us*, and *we* will call upon thy name. Turn *us* again, O Lord God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and *we* shall be saved." Ps. xcv. "O come, let *us* sing unto the Lord; let *us* make a joyful noise unto the rock of *our* salvation. Let *us* come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise with psalms. For the Lord is a great

God, and a great King above all gods," &c. To come before the presence of Jehovah, was to enter the Temple for the purpose of religious worship; for Jehovah was considered as dwelling between the cherubim, which were there. The 106th, 108th, 149th, and in short a considerable part of the Psalms, as observed before, were evidently composed expressly for social worship. In whatever way they were recited, they were devout addresses to Jehovah, consisting of adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and petition, which constitute the definition of prayer, and the principal meaning of divine worship.

2 Chron. xx. 4—13, we are informed, when a numerous army of the Moabites and others came against Jehoshaphat, that "Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem," and prayed to God; "and all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children," evidently uniting in this act of religious worship. The prayer, which is recorded on this occasion, is such as manifestly implies the participation and concurrence of all the people. And in the 18th verse we are informed that "Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah with the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. And the Levites stood up to praise the

Lord God of Israel with a loud voice." And their prayer was heard.

After the revolt of the ten tribes during the cruel and tyrannical reign of Rehoboam, the Israelites were miserably devoted to the worst customs of idolatry; and, notwithstanding the most solemn and repeated warnings, so incorrigible did they become, that they were at length given up as a prey to their enemies; their cities and their temple were destroyed, and they themselves carried into captivity by the Chaldeans. During this long and gloomy period^a, however, the worship of the true God was by no means wholly forsaken; and so salutary was the lesson which they received from this severe chastisement of seventy years, that after their restoration to their own country, this unhappy people never again relapsed into the wretched superstition and abominable vices of heathen nations, to which they had been addicted. On their return from Babylon, when the Temple was begun to be rebuilt, we are informed, Ezra iii. 10, 11, the Levites, the sons of Asaph, were restored to their office of celebrating the praises of Jehovah, "after the ordinances of David king of Israel; and they sung together by course, in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel; and all the people shouted with a great shout, when

^a About 250 years.

they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid." And when Ezra afterwards publicly read the book of the law, which had been nearly forgotten during the captivity, it was introduced by a solemn act of worship. Nehemiah viii. 6: "And when Ezra opened the book, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen,' with lifting up of their hands," &c. And in the next chapter, ver. 4, we are informed, "All the people stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day, and another fourth they confessed and worshiped the Lord their God."

In Zechariah viii. 20—23, there is a passage which evidently refers to the public worship of God in Jerusalem: it is a prophecy that was delivered for the encouragement of the people in rebuilding the city, &c. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord," &c. To what can this language refer but to public social worship? To pray before the Lord, was to pray in his house, where he was supposed to dwell,

originally in the Temple, but also in the Synagogue, for there was an ark, which was considered as the seat of the peculiar presence of Jehovah.

In the prophecy of Joel, ii. 15—17, there is a command to sanctify a fast, and to call a solemn assembly for prayer and supplication, which “the priests, the ministers of the Lord,” were to conduct “between the altar and the porch of the Temple,” the place, no doubt, where they were accustomed to offer up their prayers, and evidently in the presence of the people, as well as in their behalf. And it may be added finally, that there was an assembly of all the males before God in Jerusalem, three times a year, not for rejoicing only, but for religious worship, and especially to express their gratitude to their Supreme Benefactor for the most remarkable instances of his favour. Deut. xvi.^a

To all this it has been added, that in the first book of Maccabees, which, in the words of Prideaux^b, is “a very accurate and excellent history,” chap. iii. ver. 44, we learn that in consequence of the apprehension which Judas and his brethren entertained of the designs of Antiochus, the congregation was gathered together, that

^a Some account of the manner in which the religious services were conducted at the passover, the principal of these festivals, will be given hereafter; and it will then appear that the public worship on these occasions was entirely social.

^b Prideaux’ “Connexion,” part ii. book iii. p. 185. See Pope’s Answer to Wakefield.

they might be ready for battle, and also that they might pray, and ask mercy and compassion. From the nature of the prayer itself, it was evidently the act of the whole people. This was about 200 years before Christ, at a time when the Jews, from having been totally remiss in their attention to the ceremonies of their religion, were become exact and strict in them even to a degree of superstition. From another instance also in this book it appears, that social prayer was then connected with the Mosaic ritual.

From the instances which have been selected, then, it is perfectly manifest that the Israelites were always accustomed to public social worship, consisting of both prayer and praise; and it is observable that of these instances some consist of thanksgiving and adoration; some of confession of sin; others of petition; and in others all these are united. Should it be said that part of them took place on extraordinary occasions, and are therefore no proofs of the common practice of the Jews, it is obvious to reply that they are such instances only of which the historian would take any notice; the usual and every-day services of religion would of course be passed over in silence, just as days of public thanksgiving, or any solemn act of national worship on some singular occasion, might be mentioned by historians of the present day, whilst the regular worship of the Sunday would not form a subject sufficiently remarkable to be adverted to. The whole of

these instances, however, together with the psalms composed expressly for the Temple service, and the officers appointed to conduct it, prove incontestably that social worship was the constant and stated practice of the Jews, and that it was always connected with the observance of the Mosaic rites.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that in the first edition of Mr. Wakefield's pamphlet against public worship, which at the time excited considerable attention, he says expressly, "I find no circumstances in the Scriptures, concerning this people, the Hebrews, that wear any aspect of public worship, as we conduct it;" but in his second edition he abandoned this topic of argument, in consequence of the satisfactory answers to it^a, and allows himself to have been mistaken. He adds, however, that the Jewish public worship is nothing to the purpose^b; in which he appears to us to have been equally mistaken: and, among other reasons, because, in the first place, this part of the religious services of the Jews appears to have been sanctioned by the personal attendance of Christ and his apostles; and secondly, the universal prevalence of social prayer and praise among this people, accounts satisfactorily for no command occurring in the New Testament for the observance of this custom. To this

^a From the able pens of Mrs. Barbauld, Dr. Disney, Mr. Simson, and Mr. Pope.

^b See Pope's Answer to Wakefield.

it may be added, that social prayer is a duty altogether independent of the Mosaic institutes; but by its connexion with them it may be considered as receiving an additional divine sanction.

Notwithstanding all this, however, it is still maintained that social prayer did not form a part of the Temple service, if it did of the ancient synagogues. It may be proper, therefore, to state more particularly, on the best authority that can be procured, in what the services of both these places of public worship consisted, especially in the time of Christ: and this we shall do on the authority of writers who, having made the best use of whatever sources of information on this subject remain, will be readily acknowledged to be the most competent judges of it, and who verify the statements which they make by reference to the most ancient Jewish and other writers, as well as the Scriptures.

SECTION II.

The Religious Services of the Temple in the Time of Christ ^a.

The services of the Temple consisted of sacrifices and offerings, the reading of the law, prayers,

^a The following particulars may be found in Lightfoot's treatise entitled "The Temple Service as it stood in the Days of our Saviour;" in Lewis's "*Origines Hebrææ*, the Antiquities of the Jewish Republic;" Prideaux's "Connexion," &c. part i. books iii. and iv.; Millar's "History of the Church

and sacred music, both vocal and instrumental. For each department of these services, numerous officers were appointed, whose stated employment it was to conduct them with great exactness, and latterly with equal superstition. They consisted of twenty-four courses of priests, as many of the singers who were the Levites, and an equal number of porters. To these were added also twenty-four courses of officers, who were called *Israelites of the station*; each of these courses consisting of a considerable number of individuals^a. Though this latter title does not occur in the Scriptures, it seems however plainly deducible from thence; for by a maxim in reference to their sacrifices, the greater part of them could not be offered, except the persons were present whose sacrifices they were. The principal of them, as the daily morning and evening offering of a lamb for instance, were sacrifices in behalf of the whole people^b. But the whole people could not at any time be present. And in other cases of sacrifices presented by individuals, it might often happen that the persons whose offerings they were would unavoidably be ab-

under the Old Testament;" Reland's "*Antiquitates Sacre Veterum Hebræorum delineatæ*;" Godwin's "Moses and Aaron;" Selden's Works, vol. i.; "The Book of the Religious Ceremonies and Prayers of the Jews, translated from the Hebrew, by Gam. Ben Pedahzur," 8vo. London, 1738; but especially Vitringa's *de Synagoga Vetere*, and Buxtorf's *Synagoga Judaica*.

^a Lightfoot's "Temple Service," ch. viii. sect. 3. p. 62.

^b Lev. i. 3. iii. 2, 8.

sent. It became necessary, therefore, that on all these occasions some persons should be deputed to represent them; and this being more than the same individuals were equal to constantly, twenty-four courses of them were appointed for this purpose. These officers were also called the angels, or messengers, of Israel, because they were sent, or deputed to appear before God in behalf of the people; and though no notice is taken of them in the Scriptures, there is ample proof of their existence in the ancient Jewish writers.

It was considered, moreover, as the duty of all the people to be present, not only at the daily sacrifices morning and evening, but also at the reading of the law, and at the prayers; and as this could never happen, the *Israelites of the station* were appointed to appear as their representatives in their absence at all these services, in order that a congregation might be constantly ensured. And though they were not required to attend at some of the sacrifices, because it was not necessary that the persons on whose behalf the sacrifice was offered, should be present to lay their hands on its head, the standing of these officers constantly at prayers, supplications, and orisons, says Lightfoot^a, and at the reading of the law, was called

^a "The Temple Service as it stood in the Days of our Saviour," ch. vii. sect. 3. pp. 64 and 65; Godwin's "Moses and Aaron," lib. i. ch. v. p. 22. See also Lewis's "Antiquities," Millar's "Church History," and the other writers on this part of the subject.

the station, from which their name is derived. With the absurdity of worshiping God by proxy, whether by Jews or others, our argument has no concern; but the constant attendance of these representatives of the people, who were necessarily absent, is by no means irrelevant. They were always considered as forming a congregation; and this circumstance alone proves that the whole services of the Temple were strictly social.

The Sacrifices.

The religious services of the Temple began with the sacrifices, the design of which was to express the religious sentiments of the worshiper by actions instead of words: they were symbols of the devout homage of the mind in acknowledgement of divine beneficence, or expressions of penitence, intended to conciliate the favour of an offended Deity. They consisted of animals, as heifers, sheep, goats, turtle-doves, and pigeons; and of inanimate things, as tithes of first fruits, flour, wine, oil, frankincense, and salt. The most holy sacrifices were those of the whole people, as burnt-offerings, sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, and peace-offerings. The inferior were those which were the offerings of individuals, as the paschal-lamb, fatlings, and tenths.

The appointed time for the commencement of the daily sacrifice of a lamb in the morning was sunrise. Part of the priests who were on duty for the week, in order to be in readiness, slept in

a building in one of the courts of the Temple, and when the lamb was brought forth to be slain, the gates of the outer court were thrown open, and the trumpets sounded for the attendance of the rest of the priests, the Levites, and the Israelites of the station, and then the sacrifice was slain. The evening services commenced with a like sacrifice at the ninth hour of the day, or at three o'clock in the afternoon^a.

Public Prayers.

Though public prayer, any more than the reading of the law, might not be considered by the high priest as any part of the duty over which he presided officially, because no directions are given respecting it by their lawgivers^b, as there are in the case of sacrifices and offerings; and though there might be no ministers of the Temple whose business it was to conduct the devotions of the people^c, yet it is certain, not only

^a Acts iii. 1.

^b The ancient Jews, however, not only considered the command, Deut. x. 12, "Thou shalt *worship* the Lord thy God," &c. as signifying prayer, but they put the same construction upon Deut. x. 12, "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to *serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul?*" &c.; for they compare this and other similar passages with Exod. xxiii. 24, 25, &c. where to *bow down* to the gods of the heathen, and to *serve* them, evidently means to worship, or to pray, as well as sacrifice to them. See Selden's Works, London, 1726, vol. i. lib. iii. cap. iii. p. 286. See also note, page 2 of this Treatise.

^c Vitringa *de Syn. Vet.* prol. p. 51.

that prayer from the first always constituted a prominent and material part of the services of the Temple, but that it was practised under a divine sanction. This is evident from expressions in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of this magnificent building^a, and from our Lord's quotation of Isaiah^b, when he cleared the outer court of the buyers and sellers; "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." One of the chief distinctions of the Temple, then, was this; it was denominated by God himself not a house of sacrifice, but a house of prayer, and thither the tribes of Israel went up to give thanks unto the name of Jehovah^c. And, as Lewis observes^d, "It is certain that prayers were daily put up together with their offerings; and though we have very few constitutions concerning them, yet the constant practice of the Jewish church, and the particular forms of prayer yet extant in their writings, are sufficient evidence. For this purpose they had liturgies, or prescribed forms, which may be proved to have been in use from

^a 1 Kings viii. 33, 34.

^b Matth. xxi. 13. Isaiah lvi. 7. See also Eccl. v. 1, 2, which evidently alludes to prayer: "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God; and be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools," &c. "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few." See also 1 Maccabees, vii. 37.

^c Ps. cxxii. 4.

^d *Origines Hebrææ*, Antiquities, &c. vol. ii. book iii. ch. xix. and book iv. ch. xiii. p. 557.

the infancy of the Hebrew nation." Some of these forms are given by Lightfoot^a, as used in the Temple; all of which are indeed specimens of prayer as clearly social as can well be imagined.

As soon as the lamb for the morning sacrifice was slain, the presiding officer, a priest, and who was called the Chief Priest for the time, summoned the rest to prayers in the room called Gazith, in one of the courts of the Temple, which they used as an oratory^b, or chapel, whilst the sacrifice was preparing. They began with the following: "Thou hast loved us, O Lord our God, with an everlasting love. With great and abundant compassion hast thou had compassion upon us, O our Father, our king; for our fathers' sake, who trusted in thee, and thou gavest them statutes of life. So be gracious to us also, O our Father. O most merciful Father, O thou compassionate one, pity us; and put it into our hearts to know, understand, obey, learn, teach, observe, do, and perform all the words of the doctrine of the law in love. Enlighten our eyes by the law, cause our hearts to cleave to thy

^a Temp. Serv. ch. ix. sect. 4. p. 108.

^b For *public* prayers, says Lightfoot. (Temp. Serv. ch. xiii. sect. 4.) And though Vitranga speaks of this part of the prayers as private, because he considered them as the prayers of the officiating priests only, yet even in this case they were social; and if the Israelites of the station attended, then they were public also, for these officers were the representatives of the people. Vitranga de Syn. Vet. prol. cap. v. p. 50.

commandments, and unite our hearts to love and fear thy name," &c. After this they repeated the ten commandments, and their phylacteries^a, or what they called the "Schemah."

After this the high priest, or in his absence one of the other priests, prepared to offer the burnt incense; and the rest of the public prayers, says Lightfoot, commenced. But before they began, a large vessel of metal was sounded, which answered the purpose of a great bell, to give notice to the inhabitants of the city that this part of the services was about to begin, and to summon them to attend. As soon as the incense was offered, upon notice of this being given, all the people in the court began their prayers^b, as it is observed

^a Lightfoot, ch. ix. sect. 4. Upon their phylacteries, (*φουλακτήρια*, conservatories, intended to keep the law in the memory, from *φυλάσσω*, to guard, or keep,) which were two pieces of parchment worn by the more zealous at least constantly, the one on the forehead, and the other on the left arm, were written the following texts; I. Exod. xiii. 3—10. II. Exod. xiii. 11—16. III. Deut. vi. 4—9. IV. Deut. xi. 13—21. Whether the phylacteries were worn or not, all the Jews were considered as under an obligation to repeat the sentences written upon them, both morning and evening, wherever they might be at the time appointed, and if possible in the Temple. Vitringa, however, affirms, from Maimonides, that the texts which were repeated on this occasion were those which constituted the "Schemah," so called from the Hebrew word with which they begin: they were the following; Deut. vi. 4—9, xi. 19—21. Numb. xv. 37—41. But this is of little consequence, except as it serves to show the care which this laborious writer has taken to verify every thing which he asserts. Vitringa, lib. iii. pars ii. cap. xvi. p. 1052.

^b Lightfoot's Temp. Serv. ch. ix. sect. v. p. 111.

in Luke 1 and 10, "The whole multitude of the people were praying without," (that is, in the outer court called the court of the women, because they were admitted there,) "at the time of incense."

Besides the prayers just mentioned, the decalogue, and phylacteries, or *schemah*, three or four other prayers are given by Lightfoot, which were used in the morning and evening services; the first of which related to their phylacteries, and the last is as follows: "Give peace, beneficence, benediction, favour, benignity, and mercy to us, and to Israel thy people. *Bless all of us as one man* with the light of thy countenance; for in the light of thy countenance, thou, O Lord our God, hast given us the law of life, and love, and benignity, and righteousness, and blessing, and mercy, and life, and peace. And let it please thee to bless thy people Israel with peace at all times, and every moment. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who blessest thy people Israel with peace. Amen^a." It is impossible to invent a prayer more evidently social than this. The gloss upon the Talmud moreover tells us, These were the people's prayers^b. At the conclusion a short prayer was added on the sabbath, as a blessing, by the course of priests that went out upon the course

^a Prideaux and Vitringa give this prayer as one of those that were used in the Synagogue: but this is not at all extraordinary; for the same prayers were used there as in the Temple, with considerable additions. Prideaux' Conn. part i. book vi. p. 178. Vitringa de Syn. Vet. lib. iii. pars ii. p. 1038.

^b Lightfoot, chap. ix. sect. 6.

that was coming in, as follows: "He that causeth his name to dwell in his house, cause to dwell among you love, and brotherhood, and peace, and friendship^a. At the conclusion of these prayers, the Priests, standing upon the steps leading into the Temple, pronounced a blessing upon the people in the words recorded Numb. vi. 24.^b The meat-offering in behalf of the people, and another for the priests, were then offered, and lastly the drink-offering. The whole was concluded with singing, accompanied by instrumental music^c; and as this was from the first one of the most distinguished parts of the services of the Temple, and relates immediately to our subject, it may be proper to give a general statement of the manner in which it was conducted.

^a 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

^b Luke i. 21, 22.

^c Nothing has been here said about the reading of the law by the high priest to the people, because this is not included in our subject; but the time for this purpose, says Vitranga, was when the sacred rites were finished. But what, as this writer asks, does Jesus mean when he says, Matth. xxvi. 55, *I sat daily with you teaching in the Temple, &c.*? In the Synagogue, when the Scriptures were read, out of respect the reader stood, but sat down when he afterwards expounded them, and taught the people. Does not this observation of Christ indicate, that a similar mode of teaching was in use in both these places? From various circumstances indeed it is evident, that the manner in which the religious services were conducted in the Temple bore a considerable resemblance to those of the Synagogue, as far as they were introduced into the latter. Vitranga also observes, that in one of the courts of the Temple itself there was a house for prayers, for reading the law, and expounding, consecrated expressly for these purposes. Vitranga de Syn. Vet. prol. cap. iv. p. 27, 36—39.

Music of the Temple Service.

David appears to have instituted this part of the services at the time when he recovered the ark from the Philistines, appointed singers and instrumental performers to conduct it, and composed psalms for their use ^a. These officers were the Levites, with some Israelites of distinction, and their children were occasionally permitted to assist them. One individual presided over each department: Asaph was the chief appointed by David ^b. The vocal was always considered as the principal part, and the instrumental an accompaniment only. The requisite number of singers was twelve, and as many more were allowed as could conveniently attend: they were always very numerous ^c.

The psalms that were regularly sung in the ordinary service were the following: on the 1st day of the week, Ps. 24th, on the 2d the 48th, on the 3d the 84th, on the 4th the 94th, on the 5th the 91st, on the 6th the 93d, and on the sabbath the 92d, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord," &c. which bears the title of a psalm for the sabbath. These psalms were sung con-

^a He would scarcely have done this, however, if these services had been inconsistent with the official duties of the Levites, or if they had not been included in those duties, as appointed by Moses. That they were so, may perhaps be inferred from Deut. x. 8.

^b 1 Chron. xv. 16, &c. xvi. 4—7.

^c Lewis's Antiquities, vol. ii. book. ii. chap. 20. Lightfoot's Temp. Serv. chap. vii. sect. 2.

stantly throughout the year; but on certain days others were added, as on the sabbath especially, when at the time the additional sacrifice was offered, the Levites recited the song of Moses in Deut. xxxii. "Hear, O heavens," &c. But this song was divided into six parts, one of which was sung each sabbath in succession. At the additional evening sacrifice, they recited the song of Moses, which is recorded Exod. xv., in the same manner. At the feast of trumpets^a on the first day of the year, they sang in the morning after the additional sacrifice for that day the 81st Psalm, and in the evening of the same day the 29th. At the passover they recited or sang six additional psalms^b.

But it is the manner in which the singing was conducted that deserves the chief attention, as proving indisputably the perfectly social nature of this part of the service. "The singers," says Lightfoot^c, "divided each of these psalms into three parts, making a considerable pause at the

^a So called because the new year was ushered in with the sound of trumpets. Numb. xxviii. 9, 10. xxix. 1, 2.

^b At the dedication of the second Temple, after the return from the Babylonian captivity, the 146th, 147th and 148th Psalms seem to have been sung; for in the Septuagint they are entitled "Psalms of Haggai and Zachariah," as if they had been composed by them for the occasion. Prideaux's Conn. part i. book iii. Lewis's Ant. vol. ii. chap. xix. And to this it may be added that the 120th and 14 following Psalms have been said to be entitled "songs of the steps," (not degrees,) because they were sung on the steps which led from the court into the Temple.

^c Chap. vii. sect. 2.

end of each part; and when the singing and musical instruments stopped, in the intervals the trumpets sounded and the people worshiped," not by bowing the head only, but by responses, thus expressing their participation and concurrence. This then was clearly social worship: it was conducted by the Levites, and the people joined in it throughout.

From the whole of this account, then, it is evident that the entire service of the Temple was not only public, but as social as possible. It was the service of the whole people, conducted by officers appointed for this purpose.

The mode of prayer, it is true, was probably different from that in use among Christians. There is no proof that they had any minister to conduct this part of the services, and Prideaux says, that every one repeated what prayers he thought proper according to his own conceptions, referring to the instance of the Pharisee and publican, as mentioned by Christ^a. It appears however from Lightfoot's and other accounts of these services, on the best authority, that they had forms, and of these several have been given. The comment moreover upon the Talmud says expressly^b, that these were the prayers of the people; and Maimonides^c observes that their

^a Luke xviii. 10, &c.

^b Temp. Serv. ch. ix. sect. 6.

^c Maimonides, who lived about the end of the eleventh century of the Christian æra, was the most learned and least superstitious of the Jewish writers. "He was the Jewish oracle,"

prayers were at first free, and unrestricted with respect both to time and forms, but that after their return from the Babylonian captivity, they made use of forms, and at stated times^a. And with respect to the Temple service, the fact evidently was, that at the times of morning and evening sacrifice they had public prayers, in which all the people joined, either personally or by their representatives; and the outer court of the Temple being constantly open during the day, individuals went thither at other times, when they pleased, each to offer up his own prayer in his own thoughts and words; so that to infer from the instance of the Pharisee and publican, that all the prayers offered in the Temple were private, or individual and unsocial, would be just as reasonable as if a stranger who had never attended the religious worship of the Roman Catholics in the present day, should conclude that they had no public prayers, because he happened to go into one of their chapels when two or three individuals were repeating their prayers separately, as is commonly seen to be the case, after the public services are concluded.

says Lewis, "an author, as Cuneus observes, above our highest praise; the only man of that nation who had the good fortune to understand what it is to write seriously, and to the purpose." (Preface to his *Ant.* p. 74.) Lightfoot and Vitringa have made ample use of his works, which treat at large of the services of the Temple and the Synagogue. He made an excellent Abridgment of the Talmud, and "for this and his other works," says Prideaux, "he was esteemed the best writer among the Jews." Prideaux's *Conn.* part i. book v. p. 228.

^a Vitringa de *Syn. Vet.* lib. iii. pars ii. cap. xiv. p. 1032.

Whilst the Jews had forms of prayer which they were required to repeat at least three times a day^a, once in private, and if possible at the morning and evening service in the Temple, they were at liberty to use each for himself any other prayers he might think proper. And as it was considered to be the duty of all, who could, to be present at public prayers, considerable numbers usually attended on these occasions, as appears from Luke i. 10.^b This then was at least prayer in society; and as they were in the habit of repeating the same forms, it was not individual and separate, but prayer in conjunction, or strictly social. However, the following circumstances are decisive: Whilst the people themselves were praying in the outer court, the officers of the Temple, called the Israelites of the Station, who were the delegates of the people, were repeating the prayers in their behalf. And if they had no priest, or minister, to lead their devotions^c, the reason appears to

^a Such was the practice of David and Daniel. Ps. lv. 17. Dan. vi. 10.

^b Or the account attributed to him, which, if spurious, was still written at a very early period, and is sufficient authority for a fact of this kind, mentioned as it is incidentally, and without design. Zacharias, the officiating priest for the time, being detained longer than usual, as we are informed, by a vision in the Temple, the whole multitude that had been praying without in the court of the women, were waiting for him; and the reason of this was, that having finished their public prayers, they were expecting the benediction which the officiating priests always pronounced at the conclusion of this part of the services. (v. 22.) Lightfoot's Temp. Serv. ch. ix. sect. vi.

^c It is not proved, at least, that there was no such leader.

have been this ; “ The offering of incense,” as Prideaux observes^a, “ upon the golden altar in the Holy Place, at every morning and evening service in the Temple, at the time of the sacrifice, was instituted on purpose to offer up unto God the prayers of the people, who were then without praying unto him. And hence it was that St. Luke tells us, that while Zacharias went into the Temple to burn incense, ‘ the whole multitude were praying without at the time of incense.’ And for the same reason it is that David prayed, ‘ Let my prayers be set before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice^b.’ And according to this usage is to be explained what we find in Revelation (ch. viii. 4, 5), for there it is said, ‘ An angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it up with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne ; and the smoke of the incense, which came

Perhaps the Israelites of the Station were considered as such : they were denominated the angels of the people, like the reader of the prayers in the Synagogue. Or if not, there is a passage in Joel, already quoted (p. 41), ch. ii. 15—17, in which, when the congregation of all the people were gathered together, the priests are commanded to offer up prayers in their behalf, between the porch of the Temple and the altar. This probably was not inconsistent with the usual practice. See also 1 Maccabees, vii. 36, 37.

^a Conn. part i. book vi. p. 383 ; Godwin’s Moses and Aaron, lib. ii. ch. i. p. 64.

^b Ps. cxli. 2.

with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hands,' " &c. However inconsistent it may be with the more rational and enlightened devotion required by the Christian religion, it is clear that this practice gave a unity to the public prayers of the Temple, and rendered the whole perfectly social. To this it may be added, that all the people joined throughout in the prayers of the Synagogue, as will appear hereafter; and it is properly observed, that the Synagogue service was set up, not in opposition to that of the Temple, or to supply its deficiencies, but in support of it; and consequently, with the exception of the sacrifices and levitical offices, all the services of the Synagogue were framed as nearly in conformity with those of the Temple as possible^a. From all this then it is evident, that the whole services of the Temple, including prayer, which was practised there under a divine sanction, and praises, constituted public social worship.

SECTION III.

The religious Worship of the Synagogue.

The importance of the religious worship of the ancient Synagogue in reference to our subject, is manifest from several considerations; and in the first place, from its antiquity. Whether,

^a Vitringa de Syn. Vet. prol. cap. iv. p. 27.

indeed, there existed synagogues, or places of worship similar to them, by whatever name they might be known, before the Babylonian captivity, is subject of dispute. Prideaux endeavours to prove there were not^a. This opinion however is not supported by sufficient evidence, and there are various circumstances which afford the strongest indications that such places did exist before that time. The Israelites, for instance, had but one tabernacle before the prosperous reign of Solomon, and afterwards but one temple at Jerusalem. Three times a year all the males were required to resort thither for religious purposes; but what became of their stated public worship of God in all other places during the rest of the year? The services of the Temple were observed with great solemnity and exactness; but this place, during these periods, would be attended only by the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Had the rest of the nation, that is, a great majority of the people, no stated public worship, whilst at Jerusalem it was observed with so much care and regularity? This is incredible. The sabbath, according to the design of its institution, was “sanctified and holy unto the Lord^b,” that is, it was consecrated to religious purposes. Moses himself, moreover, gave an express command in the name of Jehovah, that there should be statedly

^a Conn. part i. book iv. p. 387.

^b Exod. xx. 8, and xxxi. 14, 15.

and regularly “ holy convocations ” on this day^a. And what could these holy convocations be but assemblies for public worship, hearing the law, &c. ? These assemblies also must meet in every considerable town throughout the country, if they met at all ; for the command given to them was, “ Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day^b ; ” and accordingly a sabbath-day’s journey was less than a mile. Had they no covered buildings, then, in which to perform their religious services, or did they meet in the open air ? Prideaux thinks the *proseuchæ* were the only places besides the Temple to which they resorted for prayer^c. But in the first place, these buildings seem to have been altogether unfit for stated public worship, as they appear to have consisted of walls only, without a covering, and consequently assemblies of people could scarcely be supposed to meet in them statedly, at all seasons, for religious services^d. These

^a Lev. xxiii. 2, 3. Exod. xii. 16.

^b Exod. xvi. 29.

^c Those who lived at a distance from the Tabernacle, he observes, while that was in being, and afterwards from the Temple, when that was built, not being able at all times to resort thither, built courts, like those in which they prayed at the Tabernacle and at the Temple, therein to offer up their prayers unto God, which in aftertimes we find called by the name of *Proseuchæ*. Connexion, part i. book vi. p. 387.

^d “ The court in which the Temple stood, and that without called the court of the women, were built round with stately buildings and cloisters ; and the gates entering thereinto were very beautiful and sumptuous. And the outer court, which was a large square encompassing all the rest of 750 feet on every side, was surrounded with a most stately and magnifi-

places, moreover, were never erected in towns, but always without in the open country, as was that in which Christ spent the night on a mountain, and another near Philippi, by the side of a river, where Paul taught the women that resorted thither^a. They seem to have been designed for the retirement of individuals for the purpose of prayer, whenever they thought proper, and not for public worship^b. Again, it may be inquired, How came the Jews, after their return from Babylon, to erect synagogues in all their towns, for the purpose of public worship, as well as the reading of the law, if before that time there had been none? Their proneness to idolatry, immediately before their captivity, does not appear to be sufficient to account for this astonishing and universal change in their religious customs. As to the form and the name of the buildings, these are of no importance. The question is, Had they

cent cloister, sustained by three rows of pillars on three sides of it, and by four on the fourth. This was the case with the first Temple; and in process of time all the outbuildings were restored, so that in Herod's time the second Temple came little short of the former. These cloisters afforded convenient shelter to the people in time of rain." Prideaux's Conn. part i. book iii. p. 145. Had the *proseuchæ* any such accommodations? If so, they might be used for public prayer.

^a Acts xvi. 13, 16. In the 16th verse the original word *proseuche* probably refers to the place.

^b Godwin, however, expresses a doubt whether the *proseuchæ* were not the same as their schools and synagogues, the former of which were as common as the latter, and were used for the purpose of religious instruction. See his "Moses and Aaron," p. 72.

not in all their considerable towns regular assemblies at stated times, and especially on the sabbath, for public worship, the hearing of the law, and receiving religious instruction? If they had, of which there can surely be little doubt, they would of course meet in covered buildings for these purposes, though it is not of any consequence by what name these places were known, or in what form they were erected. The fact seems to be, that the services of the synagogues, and consequently the buildings themselves, gradually rose out of the common religious worship of the Hebrews, various as it might be in some of its forms, in the different periods of their existence as a people. The patriarchs worshiped God by prayer and sacrifice, together with their families or tribes, as stated before, at altars erected in the different places where they happened to reside. But when collected together, as their numbers increased, and living in towns and cities, they would naturally be more inclined to associate, as in every thing else, so in the performance of religious services also; they would meet in larger assemblies, and in more convenient places for this purpose. Hence, says Godwin^a, "The origin of synagogues is uncertain; but they probably began when the tribes were settled in the Holy Land, for the distance from Jerusalem would necessarily prevent their attending public worship

^a Moses and Aaron, lib. ii. ch. i. p. 70.

there." Those who favour this opinion quote Ps. lxxiv. 8, "Thine enemies have burnt up all the synagogues of the land;" and this text indeed evidently proves, that when this psalm was composed, such places were numerous; and if the title of it can be depended upon, it was used in the time of Asaph, and consequently of David or Solomon. It is nothing to the purpose to observe, as Prideaux does, that the original may be rendered, "all the assemblies of God^a," and that no version but that of Aquila translates it "synagogues;" for to found an argument on this circumstance would be to quibble about a name; and if this were even insisted upon, synagogue is not an improper translation; for this word signifies a meeting, or assembly, and is applied both to the congregation, and the building in which they are collected together. Prideaux however admits^b, that the word in this passage necessarily

^a Buxtorf renders the word in this passage, "*Conventus, id est, conventuum loca, synagogas.*" It is the same word that occurs in the 4th verse, to which he gives the same signification, so that the English version will be, "Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy synagogues." The whole passage, from the second verse to the 8th inclusive, clearly implies that there were many more places of religious worship in the country besides the Tabernacle, or the Temple. See Buxtorf's Hebrew Lexicon on the word מועד, from יעד, *condixit, indixit, constituit*. The Hebrew name, according to the Jewish rabbies, for *synagogues*, is בית הכנסת, the House of the Congregation, the Meeting-House. This name is also sometimes given to the schools, which were generally attached to the synagogues. Reland's Hebrew Antiquities, pars i. cap. xvi. p. 57; Buxtorf's Syn. Jud. l. i. p. i. cap. x., and his Lexicon.

^b Connexion, part i. book iv. p. 387.

refers to the buildings where the people met for religious services ; which is all that our present purpose requires^a. Another passage in the Acts, ch. xv. 21, is also considered as contributing to establish the same fact ; “ For Moses of old time,” or, more properly, “ Moses from ancient generations in every city hath those who preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.” The phrase “ from ancient generations,” it is true, is indefinite. But though it might possibly be used of three or four hundred years before that time, it seems more applicable to periods of earlier date.

However, it is acknowledged by all parties, that after the return of the captive Jews from Babylon, upwards of five hundred years before Christ^b, synagogues, properly so called, soon began to be erected ; at first not many, but afterwards in considerable numbers ; for as it was lawful to build a synagogue in any place where ten persons with sufficient leisure to secure their regular at-

^a But he supposes that the places alluded to were the *proseuchæ*, the schools of the prophets, or buildings in the cities of the Levites, to which the people resorted at certain times on a religious account.

^b The decree of Cyrus for their return was issued in the year 536 before Christ ; but it was not till some years after this, that, in consequence of other decrees by his successors, Ezra and Nehemiah effected the complete restoration of all the Jews who chose to return, as well as the complete establishment of the Temple services, and the rebuilding of the city walls ; and then it would be a considerable time before synagogues could be erected generally throughout the country.

tendance on the stated services could be found, there was consequently no town of any size where the Jews resided, that had not at least one ; and in the time of Christ they were as common as parish churches in this country at present. In Tiberias, a city of Galilee, there were twelve, in Jerusalem no less than four hundred and eighty^a. This was the case, too, at a time when the law of Moses was observed with a degree of scrupulosity which had never been exceeded ; for the sufferings of the Jews, in consequence of the Chaldean conquests, had converted their former neglect of its sacred rites into superstitious veneration ; so that had the services of the Synagogue in any respect been inconsistent with this divine institution, their universal prevalence among a people in this state of mind, was impossible.

In the time of Christ, then, the worship of the Synagogue may be said with propriety to have been the national worship of the Jews, much more so than even that of the Temple ; for though the latter only included the sacrifices which the law appointed, the former, as it was more simple, more rational, and better adapted to general observance, was that which the great body of the people throughout the country universally attended. The number who statedly joined in the services of the Temple was small, compared

^a Prideaux, Conn. part i. book vi. p. 374 ; Godwin's Moses and Aaron, lib. ii. ch. i. p. 70 ; and all the other principal writers on the subject. In Jerusalem there was one for strangers called the Synagogue of the Libertines. Acts vi. 9.

with those in Jerusalem and the other towns wherever the Jews dwelt, who regularly worshiped at the Synagogue. And when in addition to this circumstance, and the high antiquity of social worship in some form or other, it is considered that Christ^a and his apostles^b gave a preference to the services of the Synagogue, as was proved by their regular attendance upon them, wherever they might be on the sabbath, the importance of the worship of these places in reference to our subject is sufficiently manifest, and seems to render the following statement of the

^a Matth. iv. 16.

^b Acts xviii. 8, 17, and other passages. Christ might with perfect consistency join in the social prayers of his countrymen; for they contained the principal doctrines which he himself taught, and nothing opposed to them; as, the unity of God; his sole supremacy; his essential and everlasting mercy; his universal providence, and the resurrection of the dead; without any thing like the Pagan mixtures of a father-God, the mother of God, a God the son, a God called the Holy Ghost, "proceeding from the Father and the Son" without a mother, and a multitude of inferior divinities called saints and angels, the natural successors of the numerous tribes of heathen deities, with the change in many instances of little else than the name, worshiped upon similar, nay in Italy even the same altars, and with rites, though less licentious, yet equally superstitious. In these prayers again, as in the teaching of Christ, not a syllable is to be found of vicarious suffering, or vicarious obedience; that is, the innocent suffering the punishment due to the guilty, and obeying the will of God in his stead; nothing of salvation by faith in the merits of another, without good works; nothing of satisfaction for sin, or of mercy exercised in the forgiveness of debts, when those debts have been fully paid; not a syllable of unconditional election and reprobation, &c. From contradictions and absurdities like these, the prayers of the Jews and the instructions of Christ are equally free.

manner in which they were conducted highly proper and necessary. To all this it may be added, that the services of the Synagogue have been shown by Vitringa to have furnished the model upon which those of the primitive Christian churches were formed ; and though this, no doubt, was without design, and the difference in some instances was considerable, yet as far as relates to our subject the resemblance was striking and essential.

The religious services of the Synagogue, then, consisted of prayer and praise, the reading of the law and other parts of the Old Testament Scriptures, with expounding them, and exhortation or preaching. Nor is it possible that any mode of prayer should be more completely social than that of the ancient Synagogue.

For their prayers, as in the Temple, they had forms or liturgies ; nor were any other prayers made use of in the Synagogue^a than those that were appointed. At first these prayers were few ; but afterwards they increased so much in number, and were accompanied by so many ceremonial observances, that they at length equalled, if they did not surpass, the formal and superstitious worship of the Roman Catholic church^b. That this was the case in a great measure in the time of Christ, is evident from his severe reproofs

^a Vitringa de Syn. Vet. cap. iv. p. 43.

^b Lewis's Antiquities, vol. ii. book iii. ch. xxii.

of the dependence which they placed on the length and number of their prayers.

The principal of them were the eighteen prayers^a, so called by way of distinction, and which were considered as the most important part of their liturgy. To these, one composed by Rabbi Samuel, called the *Less*, against Heretics, that is, the Christians, is said to have been added by Rabbi Gamaliel a short time before the destruction of Jerusalem. These eighteen prayers are believed by the Jews to have been composed by Ezra, assisted by the members of the Great Synagogue, in his time, consisting of one hundred and twenty individuals, among whom were said to be three prophets, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi, if not Daniel. They are written in the purest Hebrew, and were required by Ezra to be always repeated in that language without variation, because after the return from Babylon, where the captive Jews had been accustomed to use the Chaldee, he perceived the Hebrew to be on the decline^b. To these there were many additions in their liturgies, the whole including all the necessary and most important subjects of prayer. But the eighteen prayers have always been held by the Jews in the greatest veneration, and have constantly formed a fundamental part of their liturgies, wherever they have been dispersed.

^a Or "Schemon Esre."

^b Lewis's *Antiquities*, vol. ii. book iii. chap. xxii; Vitringa, lib. iii. pars ii. cap. xiv. p. 1032; Prideaux's *Conn.* part i. book vi. p. 375.

They are taken by Vitringa, together with the nineteenth, from the Tract of Maimonides, in which he gives an account of the series of Jewish prayers for the whole year, and are as follows^a:

I. "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob; the great God, powerful, to be had in veneration; the most high God, bountifully dispensing benefits; the creator and possessor of the universe, who rememberest the piety of our fathers, and in thy love bringest a redeemer to their posterity for thy name's sake, O our king, our helper, our saviour, and our shield. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who art the shield of Abraham.

II. "Thou, O Lord, art powerful for ever. Thou givest life to the dead, and art mighty to save; making the dew to descend, stilling the winds, sending down the rain upon the earth, sustaining all that live with thy beneficence, and of thy abundant mercy causing the dead to live again; upholding those that are falling; healing the sick; loosing them that are bound, and maintaining thy faithfulness to them that sleep in the dust. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, the most powerful? Who is like unto thee, O King, who killest and makest alive, and who causest salva-

^b These eighteen prayers were held in so much estimation, that the Jews were required to repeat them twice a day either at home or in their synagogues, and also as frequently a confession of faith in the unity of God. Vitr. p. 1032.

tion to spring up and flourish again as the herb of the field? For thou art faithful to raise the dead to life again. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who raisest the dead to life.

III. "Thou art holy, and thy name is holy, and thy saints do praise thee every day. *Selah.*^a Blessed art thou, O Lord God most holy.

IV. "Thou of thy mercy givest to men knowledge, and teachest them understanding; therefore upon us bestow knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who of thy mercy givest knowledge unto men.

V. "Bring us back, O our Father, to the observance of thy law; and cause us to adhere to thy precepts; make us diligently to apply ourselves to thy worship, and turn us to thee by sincere repentance in thy presence. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who dost vouchsafe to accept our repentance.

VI. "Be thou merciful to us, O our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, O our King, for we have transgressed thy commandments, because thou art a God, good and ready to forgive. Blessed art thou, O Lord most gracious, who multiplieth thy mercies in the forgiveness of sins.

VII. "Look, we beseech thee, upon our affliction; defend us in all our contentions, plead our cause in all our litigations, and hasten our re-

^a Prideaux adds the following sentence here, "For a great King and holy art thou, O God. *Selah.*" I have inserted these eighteen prayers as they are given by Vitringa.

demption; for thou art God, a mighty king, our redeemer, irresistible in power. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the redeemer of Israel."

VIII. "Heal us, O Lord our God, and we shall be healed; save us, and we shall be saved, because thou art our praise. Grant us a perfect remedy for all our infirmities; for thou art a God who givest health to the sick, and art merciful. Blessed art thou, O God, who healest the diseases of thy people Israel."

IX. "Bless us, O Lord our God, in all the works of our hands, and bless unto us the seasons of the year; and dispense the dew and the rain copiously upon the whole face of the land; satisfy the world with thy blessings, and water the whole habitable globe. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who givest thy blessings to the seasons of the year."

X. "Convoke us together, by the sound of the great trumpet, to the enjoyment of our liberty, and lift up thy ensign to gather together into our own land all thy people that are scattered in exile, from the four quarters of the earth. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who gatherest together the exiles of thy people Israel."

XI. "Restore unto us our Judges as in the beginning and our counsellors as at the first, and remove far from us affliction and trouble; and do thou reign over us in benignity and mercy, in righteousness and justice. Blessed art thou, O

Lord our king, who lovest righteousness and justice."

XII. "To those that apostatize from religion let there be no hope; and let all heretics, how many soever they may be, suddenly perish. And let the kingdom of pride be speedily rooted out, and broken to pieces in our days. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who destroyest the wicked, and humblest the proud^a."

XIII. "Upon the pious and the just, upon the proselytes of justice^b, and upon the remnant of thy people Israel, let thy mercies descend, O Lord our God; and bestow a large reward upon all, whosoever they may be, who sincerely trust in thy name; grant us our portion with them, and never let us be ashamed because we trust in thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who art the support and confidence of the just."

XIV. "Dwell in the midst of Jerusalem thy city, as thou hast promised, and speedily in our days erect it with buildings that shall last for ever. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who buildest Jerusalem."

^a This is the blasphemous prayer against the Christians (called the 19th) which was added by Rabbi Gamaliel to the 18 about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.

^b The proselytes of justice were such as received the whole law, and conformed in all things to the Jewish religion. The proselytes of the gate were so called because they worshiped only in the outer court of the Temple, and were admitted no further than the gate leading into the inner court. They conformed only to the seven precepts of the sons of Noah.

XV. "Very speedily make the offspring of thy servant David to flourish; let our horn be exalted in thy salvation; for we hope for thy salvation every day. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who makest the horn of our salvation to flourish."

XVI. "Hear our voice, O Lord our God, most merciful father, and spare and have mercy upon us; with compassion and benignity accept our prayers; and send us not empty away, we beseech thee, O our king, from thy presence; for thou mercifully hearest the prayer of thy people Israel. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hearest prayer."

XVII. "Be thou propitious, O Lord our God, to thy people Israel; have regard unto their prayers; bring back the levitical service to the inner part of thy house; make haste to accept with love and favour the burnt offerings of Israel, together with their prayers; and let the worship of thy people be well pleasing and acceptable to thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who bringest back thy presence to Zion^a."

XVIII. "We will give thanks unto thee with

^a By "the inner part of thy house" is meant the Holy of Holies, into which the high priest only entered but once a year; and by "thy presence," the Shechinah.

The second Temple wanted the original ark, with the mercy seat; the Shechinah, or the symbol of the divine presence; and the Urim and Thummim, by which the will of God on extraordinary occasions was made known; so that there is nothing in this prayer inconsistent with the belief that it was composed by Ezra and the members of the Great Synagogue in his time.

praises continually; for thou art the Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, the rock of our life, and the shield of our salvation. To all generations will we give thanks unto thee, and declare thy praise, because of our life which is in thy hands, and of our souls which are under thy care; because of thy signs which are constantly with us, and of thy wonders and thy bounties, which morning and noon and night are continually before us. O thou beneficent Creator, whose tender mercies are not consumed! O thou merciful Father, whose loving kindnesses are infinite! for ever do we hope in thee. For all these benefits, thy name be blessed and exalted for ever and ever; and let all that live celebrate thy praise. Selah. And let them in truth praise thy name, O God of our salvation, and our help! Selah. Blessed art thou, O Lord, whose name is good, and whose praise it is always right to celebrate!"

XIX.^a "Give peace, beneficence, and benediction, favour, benignity and mercy, to us and to Israel thy people. Bless *all of us*, O our Father, *as one man*, with the light of thy countenance. Thou hast given us, O Lord our God, the law of life; and of thy favour alone thou hast followed us with love, benignity, benediction, mercy, life and peace. And let it please thee to bless thy people Israel at all times and every moment with

^a This prayer has been given before (page 52), as stated by Lightfoot to have been used in the Temple service.

thy peace. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who blest-est thy people Israel with peace.”

Concerning these prayers, several remarks occur; and

First, Their high antiquity appears to some persons to be doubtful. This scepticism, however, seems to have arisen entirely from the circumstance that several of them have the appearance of having been written after the final destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews. But, says Prideaux^a, “it is certain they are very ancient, for mention is made of them in the Mishnah^b, as at that time old settled forms, and no doubt is to be made that they were used in our Saviour’s time; at least most of them, if not all the eighteen; and consequently that he joined in them with the rest of the Jews, whenever he went into their Synagogues, as he did every sabbath day.” It is also deserving of attention, that the Jews themselves have always attributed the composition, or the appointment of them for general use, to Ezra, with the assistance of the members of the Great Synagogue. And it is of considerable weight in favour of their antiquity, that they are written in the purest Hebrew, a circumstance

^a Connexion, part i. book vi. p. 575.

^b The Mishnah was compiled and published about the year 150 of the Christian æra, and notwithstanding the fabulous and puerile traditions with which it abounds, in a matter of fact like that of the antiquity of the eighteen prayers, it is an authority perfectly satisfactory. Prideaux’s Conn. part v. book viii. p. 574. See Appendix, No. 1.

which in more modern times could scarcely be expected.

“And with respect to the prayers that have the appearance of having been composed after the final destruction of Jerusalem, which are chiefly the 10th, 11th, and 14th,” as Prideaux also observes^a, “these may refer to calamities of more ancient times.” And it is worthy of remark, that several of the Psalms, the antiquity of which is unquestionable, are liable to the same objection; for they contain complaints and prayers for the removal of similar calamities^b.

It is certain, however, there is nothing in the prayers in question inconsistent with the supposition, that they were composed by Ezra, assisted by the members of the Great Synagogue^c, at the time when the Jews were not all returned from the captivity, (many of whom never did return,) but when they were in part still dispersed and scattered; when Jerusalem and their other cities were by no means completely restored, and when their religious services as well as the people themselves were as yet in an unsettled state. To this it

^a Conn. part i. book vi. p. 275, the note.

^b Ps. liii. 6. lxxiv. 1—8. lxxviii. 60, 61, &c. lxxix. 1, &c. lxxx. cii. 16, 17. cvi. 47. cxxvi. 4.

^c The appellation of Synagogue was given by the Jews, not only to their places of worship and the congregations that assembled in them, but, as here, to a council of their principal elders. This is called the Great Synagogue, by way of distinction. It consisted of a succession of members from the time of Ezra to that of Simon the Just, a period of about 200 years.

may be added, that Vitrिंगa observes^a from Maimonides, that the three first and the three last only of these nineteen prayers were considered as stated forms never to be omitted; whereas the thirteen in the middle were variable, and others much shorter were allowed, when want of time and other circumstances required, to be substituted for them. And if the three or four prayers that have given rise to doubts be admitted to have been composed after the final dispersion of the Jews, (though there is no necessity for this supposition,) still the high antiquity of the rest remains unimpeached; and being mentioned in the Mishnāh “as old settled forms,” but 150 years after the birth of Christ, there can be no rational doubt that they were used in all the Synagogues of his time, and consequently that he joined in them every sabbath. As however the Jews had also many other forms, besides the eighteen which they used in their Synagogues, comprising altogether the most important and necessary subjects of prayer, whatever might be taken from these, a sufficient number would remain that were indisputably ancient even in the time of Christ. Still these forms of devotion are highly important in reference to our subject; for it is impossible to invent prayers more social in their nature. They were evidently composed for public worship, in which all who attended joined.

^a De Syn. Vet. lib. iii. pars ii. cap. xiv. p. 1039 & 1046. See also Lewis's Antiquities, vol. ii. book iii. ch. 22.

SECTION IV.

The Manner in which the religious Worship of the ancient Synagogue was conducted.

Nothing certainly could be more social than the manner in which the religious worship of the Synagogue was conducted: it bore considerable resemblance to the mode in use in the established church of this country at present. Their liturgy was read aloud by one individual, and the people signified their concurrence by responses throughout. This reader was chosen by the congregation, anciently any elder; and it was not till more modern times, that this became a regular office confined to a stated minister^a. He was called the Angel or Legatus of the Synagogue, because he was deputed by the people to go before the ark to offer up their prayers to Jehovah^b.

^a As the Jews said that prayer in the Synagogue was substituted for sacrifice, and on this account the forms in the liturgies of these places were more numerous than those used in the Temple, the minister who read the liturgy was considered as an officer corresponding to the priest; and as no sacrifice was offered in the Temple but those that were appointed by the law, so no prayers were presented in the Synagogue during the public services but the appointed prayers. Vitringa, prol. p. 43.

^b In the ancient as well as modern synagogues there was a pulpit or desk in which the law and other parts of the Old Testament Scriptures were read and expounded; but when the prayers were recited, the minister, under the idea that it was more consistent with humility, advanced before the desk on the floor near the ark, which was at one end of the building. Vitringa, p. 1023.

The following is a brief abstract of Vitringa's account of the manner in which the Liturgy was recited in the ancient Synagogue. The whole assembly being seated, the minister (the Angel or Legatus) advanced before the ark, and standing in the midst of the people, began by reciting the prayer called "Cadish^a;" in which the people signified their participation and concurrence by joining in the several responses. The minister then recited the prayer called "Barechu;" to which the people replied, Blessed be thou, O Lord, for ever and ever. In the next place he repeated

^a As this was esteemed by the Jews the most sacred of their prayers, and is that from which the Lord's prayer has been said to have been framed, I shall give Vitringa's translation of it from the Hebrew. Two of the petitions only are found in both, and in the rest of them there is no great resemblance. The Lord's prayer seems to consist of a selection partly from this, and partly from other forms used in the social worship of the ancient Synagogue. "*Magnificetur et sanctificetur nomen ejus magnum, in mundo quem secundum beneplacitum suum creavit; et regnare faciat regnum suum; efflorescat redemptio ejus, et præsto adsit Messias ejus, et populum suum liberet, in vitâ vestrâ et diebus vestris, et in vitâ totius domûs Israelis, idque quam ocyssime. Et dicite Amen, Amen, sit nomen ejus magnum benedictum in seculum et seculorum secula. Celebratur nomen ejus et extollatur memoria ejus in sempiternum et omnem æternitatem. Celebratur, laudetur, condecoretur, exaltetur, efferatur, respiciatur, extollatur, et deprædicetur nomen Sancti Benedicti Illius longe supra omnem benedictionem et canticum, laudem et consolationem, quæ dicuntur in mundo. Et dicite, Amen, Recipe misericorditer et gratiose preces nostras. Acceptæ sint preces et desideria totius Israelis coram Patre eorum qui est in cœlis; et dicite Amen, sit nomen Domini benedictum ab hoc tempore usque in seculum.— Sit pax magna a cœlo et vita super nobis, et super toto Israele; et dicite Amen.*" See Appendix, No. 2.

the "Schemah^a," with the prayers and praises connected with it. The first of these is one of considerable length upon the creation and providential government of the world; and at the conclusion of each, responses were pronounced by the congregation.

When these were concluded, the whole assembly, rising upon their feet, repeated their prayers silently; and when the minister had finished his, he began to recite with a loud voice the eighteen prayers before given: the people listened attentively, and joined in the responses at the end of each, both those who had just repeated these prayers in silence, and those who from incapacity or absence had not^b. When the minister arrived at the third prayer, he pronounced a declaration of the promises of God.

A solemn confession of sins, with supplication for pardon, followed the eighteen prayers, which was accompanied by prostration both of the minister and the people.

The second part of the prayer called "Cadish" was then rehearsed, with the responses annexed to it. One or two other prayers followed, which were succeeded by the 145th Psalm, together with a declaration of the coming of the Messiah, and of the covenant of God with his people.

^a See page 51.

^b "Before these eighteen prayers were delivered by the minister, every one repeated them in a low voice to himself, that he might be the better prepared for the solemn rehearsal of them afterwards." Lewis's Antiquities, vol. ii. book iii. ch. xxii.

The minister next delivered a solemn declaration of the holiness of God ; to which the people replied, Holy, holy, holy art thou, O Lord of Hosts ! After some brief supplications for divine mercy, the whole was concluded with a third repetition of the prayer " Cadish," followed by the responses of the people.

Such are the outlines of Vitringa's account^a of the mode of worship observed in the ancient Synagogue. It was conducted with great solemnity ; and with respect to the social nature of it, in addition to the foregoing particulars, he observes^b, " The prayers thus recited by the minister were not only received by the people with due reverence and attention, but also with responses and acclamations agreeing with each prayer ; and by this means they testified their concurrence with the minister^c."

So perfectly social, then, was the mode of worship which Christ and his apostles sanctioned by their regular attendance upon it. It has been

^a The preceding is extracted from his account of the morning service : that for the evening was the same, with some small variations.

^b Page 1092.

^c Buxtorf observes, that the prayers of the ancient Synagogue were recited in a sort of musical rhythmus, and that the responses of the people were accompanied with acclamations, and were very loud. This accords with expressions frequently occurring in the Psalms, viz. of shouting as well as singing the praises of Jehovah. His account of these services is contained in the 10th chapter of the edition by his son, 1680. Vitringa's however is far preferable.

observed, it is true, that we read of Christ teaching, and reading the Scriptures and expounding them in the synagogues, but never of his praying there. The reason of this however is extremely obvious. The prayers were the stated part of the synagogue services, in which all who attended regularly joined; it is therefore evident that no notice whatever would be taken of our Lord's joining in them, for this was a matter of course; and when it is said that his custom was to attend the Synagogue on the sabbath, this expression will always be understood by those who have any respect for the common usage of language, as implying that he joined in the prayers like all the rest who were present. But the case is different with reading the Scriptures, and expounding them; for none were permitted to do this, but those who were called out from the assembly for this purpose by the minister.

In his own city Nazareth, as a member of the Synagogue in that place, he was selected as the reader of the lesson for the day, and took occasion, as was usual, to comment upon it. This, herefore, especially as the passage was extremely remarkable, having reference to himself as the Messiah, it was very natural and proper for the historian to notice. But this very circumstance of his being selected as the reader, proves that he was present at the prayers. In all other places, when he taught the people, it was according to

the custom, after the reading of the law and the prophets was concluded^a. And thus did St. Paul at Antioch ; which also being remarkable, especially with respect to the subject of his teaching, it was proper for the historian to mention. If a stranger happened to preach at any of our places of worship in the present day, those who heard him would naturally mention this circumstance to their friends, particularly if there were any thing singular either in his manner or his subject. But who would think of observing that he was present at the prayers, and joined in them with the others ? His being there to preach implied this. No person, therefore, who pays any attention to the meaning which general custom has assigned to these expressions, can doubt that when it is said, it was the custom of Christ and his apostles to attend the Synagogue on the sabbath day, this implies, that they constantly joined in the usual services of these places ; and we see at once, that so universal and so long established was the practice of social prayer in the habits of their countrymen, that it would never occur to them to give a particular command to enforce the observance of it, as if it were something new, or generally neglected.

In addition to this, we are informed by the Evangelists, that Christ also celebrated the Passover with his disciples ; and as this was not only a re-

^a See Prideaux's Conn. part i. book vi. p. 380.

ligious ceremony, but was accompanied by prayers and praises altogether as social as those of the Synagogue, it may be proper to add a brief account of the manner in which this festival was observed, as affording another indisputable proof, that Christ approved of social worship, and recommended it to his followers by his example^a. On the day of the Passover the people formed themselves into companies of such a number as one lamb would serve, according to the Mosaic institute^b. These lambs were all brought to the Temple to be slain, with certain ceremonies, by the priests; and whilst this was done, the Levites were employed in an act of praise, which consisted of singing the 113th and five following Psalms^c; and as the number of lambs to be slain was very considerable, and the Levites continued to sing these psalms during the whole time, they usually had to repeat them more than once or twice. This singing was introduced by a prayer, and during the whole of the former, all the people who were present joined with the Levites at frequent intervals, either by singing Hallelujah^d, or some pas-

^a Lightfoot's Temple Service, chap. iii. p. 125. See also Lewis's Hebrew Antiquities.

^b Exod. xii. 4.

^c The Psalms were sung by the Levites with the same responses of the people on eighteen days in the year, at the different festivals.

^d See Rev. xix. 1—6. The Hallelujah there described bears considerable resemblance to Lightfoot's account of the singing in the Temple at the Passover, except that the former greatly excelled the latter in grandeur.

sages of the psalms just mentioned. When the paschal lambs were slain, they were taken home by the different companies to which they belonged, to be eaten in the evening with many ceremonies^a besides thanksgiving and singing. At the paschal supper the chief of the company, an elder, and if a family, the head of it, recited the prayers and thanksgivings in the name of the rest, who joined with him by responses. Among the several forms of devotion used on this occasion, the following is the tenour of that which was recited over the wine: "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast created the fruit of the vine. Blessed be thou for this good day, and for this holy convocation which thou hast given us for joy and rejoicing. Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast sanctified Israel," &c. Another thanksgiving was the following: "O Lord our God, let all thy works praise thee, and the saints, the righteous that do thy will, and thy people of the house of Israel, all of them with acclamation. Let them praise, and magnify, and exalt, and sing aloud the name of thy glory with honour and rejoicing for remembrance of thy kingdom; for it is good to praise thee, and lovely to sing unto thy name. Thou art God for ever and ever. Blessed be thou, O Lord our king, who art greatly to be praised. Amen." The president concluded thus: "Let

^a Such as washing, eating bitter herbs, and the peace-offering, besides the paschal lamb. For the whole account, see Light-foot, p. 125.

the soul of all living bless thy name, O Lord our God, and let the spirit of all flesh glorify and exalt thy memorial for ever, O our king. For thou art our God for ever, and besides thee we have no king, redeemer, or saviour." Before the concluding benediction, they sang what the Evangelist calls a hymn, that is, they recited the six psalms mentioned before.

It was the custom for the company to drink four cups of wine on this occasion. The third cup was called the cup of blessing, partly because the blessing, or grace after meat, was said over it, as terminating the meal; and chiefly to distinguish it from the first cup, for over that as well as this a particular blessing or thanksgiving was uttered. The apostle Paul alludes to this custom when he mentions the cup of blessing, 1 Cor. x. 16. And the excesses of the Christian professors to whom he wrote, probably arose from their celebrating the Lord's Supper too much after the manner of the Passover, and abusing the customs of it, though in those customs themselves there was nothing that had a tendency to intemperance; for the company were limited to a certain quantity of wine, which was by no means immoderate.

It was also the third cup, called the cup of blessing, which Christ took, and, when he had pronounced the thanksgiving over it, as the president of the company, bid them take and divide it among themselves. After this he broke the unleavened bread, for they had before eaten the

lamb. The fourth cup was called the cup of the hallel, because it was used at the time of the singing. This Christ took, and appointed to be the cup of the new covenant of his blood^a.

Here then again were social prayer and praises, which Christ himself, as the president, delivered, and in which the apostles joined by responses.

CHAPTER III.

THE SOCIAL WORSHIP OF CHRISTIANS.

SECTION I.

Passages in the New Testament in favour of Social Prayer.

WE come at length to the distinct examination of the particular passages that occur in the New Testament relative to social prayer. And though the statements that have been given, and the observations that have been made, concerning the religious worship of the Jews have occupied so considerable a portion of these pages, they were evidently necessary on several accounts, and the whole have a bearing on this branch of our subject. We have shown the high antiquity as well as the universality of social prayer in the time of Christ, and that it formed in all periods of their

^a Lightfoot's Temple Service, chap. xiii. p. 158.

history a prominent part of the public worship of the Hebrews, even when sacrifices were most in use, and the Mosaic rites were most scrupulously observed. This is important for various reasons, but chiefly because, in the first place, prayer was used in their public religious services *under a divine sanction*, as is proved, among other considerations, by our Lord himself when he quotes the language of the prophet Isaiah; "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." His fervour too on this occasion, in so mild and forbearing a character, was extremely remarkable; and the historian has not failed to mark its singularity by applying to it a quotation from the Psalms; "As it is written, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.' " The object, moreover, of his zeal is as worthy of attention as its warmth and intrepidity. He was offended not because the sacrifices and Mosaic rites were profaned, for these were temporary and speedily to be abolished, but because prayer, public social prayer, was disregarded; for this was a duty which his God and Father had approved and required, and which would form a part of pure and spiritual worship at all times, when Jewish rites and ceremonies are forgotten. And in the second place, the preceding account of the Hebrew worship is important, for the reason before given, namely, that as Christ and his apostles were accustomed to attend the Synagogue on the sabbath, they regularly joined in the social worship

practised there, and thus by their example gave an unequivocal recommendation of it to others.

Will it then still be urged, that our Lord not only discouraged this practice, but absolutely commanded his followers to abstain from the observance of it? Had he meant to do this, and had he disapproved of social prayer as highly as its opponents in the present day wish to have it believed, what was his duty relative to this subject? As this practice had been so long and so universally established in the habits of his countrymen, instead of giving it encouragement by a regular attendance upon it in their synagogues, had he intended to set it aside, whilst his prohibition of it was the most clear and unequivocal, would he not have embraced every opportunity that occurred of warning his hearers of its pernicious tendency, and giving them exhortations to avoid it? He was a reformer of religious abuses, and came for that express purpose. Would he not have laboured incessantly to exterminate this most fundamental abuse, as he must have considered it, had he entertained the views on the subject which its opponents are ready to attribute to him? And would he not have instructed his apostles to pursue the same course? But what is the fact? In the whole account of his public instructions, there is but one passage that can with any plausibility be urged as bearing the appearance of a prohibition of social worship; and that, if examined by the same rules of interpretation as

are adopted in other cases of a like kind, will be found to have no such meaning; whilst in the recorded discourses of his apostles, and in their epistles, there is not a single expression adverse to this practice. This solitary passage, which is of so much importance as to show that professing Christians have hitherto been universally mistaken in their master's intentions, and ought to reject all public and social prayer for the future, occurs in Matt. vi. 5 and 6. "And when thou prayest, be not as the hypocrites; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, *that they may be seen of men.* Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret, will reward thee openly." Take this passage as it stands separately, without any reference to the context, to other passages of the Scriptures, or to the kind of phraseology in general use at that time, and without regard to the conduct of Christ and his apostles, or his particular design on this occasion, and it would be nothing extraordinary, if any person were led to suppose that it does contain something like a prohibition of all public social prayer. But in this way any absurdities whatever may find sufficient support in the Scriptures. It is, in fact, by the use of this method chiefly, that the popular errors of the present day, gross as they may be,

are enabled to maintain their hold on the public mind. The advocates for them are in the habit of taking detached sentences of the Bible, that seem to uphold their favourite opinions, and judging of them by the sound, despising all the just rules of criticism, overlooking the design of the writer, the context, the general strain of the Scriptures, and making no allowance for difference in the customs and modes of expression that prevailed when they were written; and in this manner it is no wonder if their hearers be misled: it would be strange, indeed, if they were not. But in forming a judgment of the passage before us, take into consideration all the circumstances that have a tendency to throw light upon it, and it will be clearly perceived, that it neither is nor can be inimical to social worship. For in the first place it should be remembered, that it is the only passage that appears to contain a prohibition of all public prayer, whilst there are many others decidedly in its favour: secondly, if our Lord intended here absolutely to forbid his followers to pray in the presence of men, then his own conduct was in opposition to his instructions; for he not only attended the social worship of the Synagogue, but there are other instances upon record in which he did pray in company: thirdly, his apostles, to whom he addressed himself on this occasion, did not so understand him; for there are various passages in the Acts and the Epistles which prove that they were in the habit

of social prayer : and lastly, if Christ here meant to prohibit all public social prayer, then in the context all almsgiving in the presence or with the knowledge of others, is as expressly forbidden by him ; for he exhorts immediately before, “ Take heed, that ye do not your alms before men, *to be seen of them*. Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” The language in this case is not less positive and absolute than in the former. Now it is perfectly evident that this exhortation cannot be meant to be understood literally, and to its full extent ; for few deeds of charity can be done with absolute secrecy ; and a large proportion of them, if performed at all, must take place in public, or with the knowledge of many individuals. Nor is it possible that so truly benevolent a teacher as Christ was, should ever intend to throw a check upon a practice, which, however wrong the motives may be from which it may sometimes proceed, is fraught with so much benefit to mankind, and for which at all times the necessity is so general and so urgent. On the contrary, he conferred the highest praise on the poor widow for casting the only two mites she possessed into the treasury, which was a public act ; and his apostles also speak with deserved commendation of the liberal contributions of individuals for the relief of others, particularly Paul, in the case of the gentiles affording such assistance to the poor brethren at Jerusalem ; none of which deeds of charity were done in se-

cret. And to this it may not be improper to add, that his own benevolent acts, though he had no money to bestow, were usually performed in public. However, there can be no doubt that the sole object of Christ in this exhortation, was to discourage as much as possible all ostentation, and to enjoin nothing but that the design of charitable deeds, according to his own words, should not be, that *they might be seen of men*.

And certainly it is equally clear that he had the same object *only* in what he forbids respecting prayer. The same phraseology is used in both cases, and with the same intention. In this passage he is evidently speaking of his disciples praying separately as individuals, and not in their social capacity. This is manifest from the nature of the case, as well as from all that has been now observed; but it is further confirmed by his use of the singular number on this occasion, and afterwards changing it for the plural. "But when *thou* prayest, be not as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the Synagogues^a, and in the corners of the streets, *that they may be seen of men*. But *thou*, when *thou* prayest, &c."

^a In the Temple, individuals were in the habit of going to pray separately at any time in public, after the social worship of that place was concluded; and it is very possible, that the same practice might be observed in the Synagogues; or, if not, many might attend the usual services of those places constantly for no purpose but to be seen of others, and on that account, and that only, are they censured. He does not condemn them because they prayed in the Synagogue, but because they prayed there *to be seen of men*.

Here then the pronoun in the singular number is repeated, and thus rendered emphatical, evidently pointing out his meaning to be, when ye pray separately as individuals, do this, not in public from motives of ostentation and parade, but retire to your closets, &c. When however he gives them a model for their devotions in the Lord's prayer, and, as Luke observes^a, at the request of his disciples, he makes use of the plural form of expression, as speaking of them collectively. "But when *ye* pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, &c. In this manner therefore pray *ye*: *Our* Father who art in heaven, &c." using the plural number throughout. This form, indeed, is evidently intended to be used in society, not less than in private. It is admirably adapted to the use of all men, at all times, and in all circumstances: it is moreover composed of sentences found in the Hebrew liturgies of that time^b, which were all used as social prayers.

To the passage under consideration, moreover, the observation has been applied^c, That among the Jews nothing was more common than the use of a phrase directly negative, and without restriction, to express a limited and comparative idea. The following are instances of this kind: "If

^a Chap. xi. 2.

^b With the exception of the expression, "as we forgive them that trespass against us," which is the only part of it upon which Christ makes any comment, as if there were nothing else in it that was new and uncommon.

^c See Simpson's Reply to Wakefield.

any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, and even his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." No one understands this as meaning any thing more than to assert the great principle, that to prefer any earthly consideration to our duty, is inconsistent with the Christian character.—Again; "Jesus cried and said, 'He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.'" The meaning of which is better expressed by Mr. Wakefield's translation, "He that believeth on me, believeth not so much on me as on him that sent me." And in the Acts, Peter says, "Ananias, thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God;" that is, "Your offence is greater against God than against men." If passages like these are to be understood literally, without regard to the nature of the particular case, the connexion in which they stand, as well as the true spirit of religion, and the principles of common sense, what are the contradictions and absurdities, as observed before, that will not find vouchers enough in the Scriptures? Similar latitude of interpretation is not only allowable, but necessary, in the exhortation of Christ, "When thou prayest be not as the hypocrites, &c." But when all the circumstances which have been stated are taken into consideration, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion, that nothing more is intended in this passage (as in that on the subject of almsgiving, the phraseology of which is pre-

cisely similar) than a solemn caution against ostentation, or praying in order *to be seen of men*, without the slightest intention of giving discouragement to social prayer, originating in right motives and accompanied by humility. It is plainly directed, and directed only, against individual prayer in places of public resort.

There is however another passage which has been urged as inimical to social worship, though it cannot indeed be pretended that it contains any prohibition of it whatever. John iv. 21, &c. "And Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, 'Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall worship the Father neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem. Ye worship what ye know not: we worship what we know; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for indeed the Father seeketh such worshipers of him. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.'" Before, however, it can be assumed that disapprobation of all public and social worship is implied in these observations, it is necessary to prove that the spiritual and true worship required by Christianity is absolutely inconsistent with that which is offered in conjunction with others; which we are so far from admitting, that we are convinced by experience and observation no means have a better tendency to promote the genuine spirit of devotion than

frequently meeting together for the purpose of giving expression to sentiments and feelings of this kind. But if these observations of our Lord are required to be understood in the full extent of their literal signification, then they must be considered as giving discouragement not only to all oral prayer, however private, but to all expression of religious homage in any way whatever, and to limit the true worship of God to the operations of the mind. Such a construction no one surely will undertake to reconcile with the example of Christ and his apostles, with the conduct of the first Christians, or with a great part of the New Testament. However, the true design of this passage can scarcely be mistaken.—Christ is here evidently speaking of public worship only; all that he says is applicable to it, and plainly implies that God, who is a spirit, may be worshiped in spirit and in truth in company with others as well as in retirement. He clearly meant to teach this mistaken woman, that the worship of the Jewish and Samaritan Temple should be abolished, and one that is sincere, consistent with truth, and perfectly independent of unnecessary ceremony and parade, should be substituted in its room;—a worship by no means restricted to national institutions or controverted systems, unrestrained by the narrow limits of prejudice and party, and such as all mankind may cheerfully join in, since it is that only which proceeds from a pure and upright heart, in whatever way it may

be offered. And accordingly this desirable consummation was effected by the introduction of Christianity into the world. The Mosaic ritual, whether in the Jewish or Samaritan form, with all its expensive, troublesome ceremonies, and invidious restrictions, was abolished by it altogether, and every man who feareth God and worketh righteousness was assured that nothing is requisite to render his religious homage, whether public or private, acceptable to God, but purity of heart and rectitude of conduct. The devotional services of the Synagogue, however, formed no part of this ritual, and to them accordingly Christ makes no allusion in the passage under consideration; and had he censured the social worship practised there, his conduct would have been at variance with his teaching.

But there is one observation in this passage, which ought not to be passed over without attention. "Ye Samaritans," says Christ, "worship what ye know not: we (Jews) worship what we know; for salvation is of the Jews." Both parties, however, worshiped the same God, the sole Creator, the one God and the Father of Jesus the Christ, and of all mankind. "After the time," says Prideaux^a, "that Manasseh brought the law

^a Connexion, part i book vi. page 425. The three points in which they differed from the Jews were; 1st, They received no more of the Scriptures than the Pentateuch; 2dly, They rejected all traditions; and 3dly, They said the true Temple was theirs on mount Gerizim, in opposition to that at Jerusalem.

of Moses among them, and instructed them in it, the Samaritans became as zealous worshipers of the true God, and as great abhorrrers of all manner of idolatry, as the most rigorous of the Jews themselves, and so continue even to this day." These words therefore refer to the mode of worship, or to circumstances connected with it, rather than to the object of it; and they clearly imply approbation of the public and social nature of that worship, as it was practised among the Jews. "Ye Samaritans worship what ye know not;" that is, though you render religious homage to the same living and true God as we do, yet your knowledge of him is not sufficient to prevent your mistaking his will respecting the nature of the worship by which he is to be addressed. We Jews, on the contrary, says Christ, worship the true God according to his own institutions: but these being intended for one people only, are speedily to be abolished, and a purer mode of *public* worship (for it is of public worship that he is here speaking) is to be introduced into its place, the only requisites to the acceptableness of which are integrity and truth.

Such then are the supposed prohibition and disapproval of social worship by our Lord:—they amount to nothing. In the time of Christ the practice of social prayer was in danger only from superstition and formality^a; for this reason there

^a Besides public prayers twice every day in the Temple at the times of the morning and evening sacrifice, they had religious

was more need of cautions against its abuse than exhortations to the observance of it; of checking its exuberance, than of strengthening its growth; of preventing its substitution for other duties more immediately useful, than of showing its reasonableness and enforcing its obligations. Hence his admonitions on the subject have this tendency, whilst his example is decisive in its favour. Nor will there be any difficulty in showing further from the passages in the New Testament, that remain for examination, that not only Christ, but his apostles and the first Christians generally, highly approved of this practice, and gave it the strongest recommendation at least by their example.

It is necessary, however, to consider previously the very peculiar and extraordinary circumstances in which they were placed, entirely different as they were from the state of Christian societies now. During the ministry of Christ his followers were not yet collected into churches. The number of real converts to his religion, who understood the nature of his mission, who cordially embraced and were practically influenced by his doctrines, was few indeed; nor was there any thing like a regular society among them, if we except the twelve apostles. Hence among themselves

services in their synagogues three days a week, besides their holidays, whether fasts or festivals; and thrice every one of those days, morning, afternoon, and evening; namely, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday; the latter, being their Sabbath, was set apart for religious exercises by divine appointments; the two former by the elders. Prideaux's Conn. part i. book ii. page 381.

there was no opportunity of uniting constantly in the duties of social worship. The Temple and the Synagogue were the only places where they could assemble, together with others, for this purpose, and these we find they did not neglect. The business of Christ also was to make converts to truth and righteousness; to convince, to correct, and to reclaim. Hence his time was occupied in working miracles to prove the divinity of his mission, and in teaching on all occasions, in the streets, in the Temple, in the synagogues, and in private companies, wherever he had access. In any of these circumstances, to introduce the practice of social prayer by a new method was impracticable, and the attempt would have been highly improper. During the public ministry of Jesus, opportunities suitable for social prayer in a way different from that which then prevailed among the Jews would very seldom occur. Notwithstanding this, however, instances are not wanting in his conduct, besides his regular attendance on the stated services of the Synagogue, which afford unequivocal proof that this practice had his entire approbation, when free from hypocritical parade, and accompanied by consistent conduct.

His admirable prayer, near the close of his ministry and his life, recorded in the 17th chapter of John's gospel, is certainly of this kind. It is of considerable length, and private prayer it was not certainly, for it was delivered in the pre-

sence of his disciples. Nor does it relate to himself alone: he prayed not only with them but for them. And why was this, if he approved only of private devotion, and if there were no propriety in their concurring with him in this act of religious worship? When a person prays aloud in company with others, and especially when he prays for them, they are always considered as joining mentally with him, if there be nothing in the prayer delivered by him inconsistent with their sentiments and feelings, as in this instance it is impossible there should be. This then was prayer in society at least, and by example a recommendation of it to others. A peculiar cast, it is true, is given to this prayer, and it is delivered in the singular number. But these circumstances are fully accounted for by the singularity of our Lord's situation, and the vast superiority which he derived from his character and office, not only to all other men, but to the apostles themselves. He was the expected Messiah, the saviour of the world; and though he could neither do nor teach any thing of himself, as he repeatedly says, he was endowed by God with greater miraculous powers than had ever been bestowed on any human being besides, for to him was given the Spirit of God without measure. Hence it is said; "All ye are brethren; one is your Master, even Christ." They are the members, he is the head. And the prayer which he delivered on this occasion was, if we may so speak, an official prayer; it was within the nature

of his office and perfectly consistent with it. This great superiority and extraordinary nature, then, of the character and office of Christ serve to account fully for the difference of style and manner of this devout address to God; but at the same time they are very far from destroying its authority as an example to us of prayer in society: if they did, then his diligence and fidelity in teaching; his indefatigable perseverance in conferring benefits on mankind; his dignified resignation and greatness of mind, in sustaining without a murmur the agonies of crucifixion, afford no example to us, because he was divinely inspired to instruct; because he was furnished by God with miraculous powers to do good; and because his death was the seal of the New Covenant in his blood, and therefore all these belonged in a peculiar manner to the high office he sustained, and the heavenly mission he came to fulfill. Prayer in society, not less than instructing the ignorant, affording succour to the needy, and enduring affliction with patience, is a duty common to all mankind, and may therefore receive additional recommendation from the example of Christ, though this as well as other duties were practised by him in circumstances the most extraordinary, and in an official capacity to which we have no pretensions. The style of the prayer we cannot imitate, for our circumstances are altogether different and our station in the Christian community inferior; but the example, as an instance of prayer in society, remains in full

force, because this is a duty which we have it in our power to practise, if we choose.

Two or three other instances occur, which, however trifling they may seem to some persons, may serve to corroborate the proof, if indeed this were necessary, that Christ approved and was in the constant habit of social worship. The two following are not unworthy of notice; for, however short the prayer, it was still social. When he wrought the miracle of feeding with five loaves and two fishes the multitude that attended him, before he distributed the food, "he looked up to heaven, and blessed God, and gave thanks^a;" an act in which, according to universal custom, those who were present as a matter of course were understood to join: and in a similar instance^b of the seven loaves and a few small fishes, he again led the thanksgivings of the people in the same manner. That such was his constant practice, is evident from a third instance^c, in conjunction with these, when after his resurrection, at Emmaus, with his two disciples, "he took bread, and blessed God," &c. An act of a similar kind occurred also at the Paschal supper, an account of which has been already given, and which he celebrated for the last time with his apostles, of course, in the Jewish manner, and with their appointed forms of devotion, including the psalms which were recited on this occasion, all of which services were social in the strictest sense.

^a Matth. xiv. 19.

^b Ibid. xv. 36.

^c Luke xxiv. 30.

It may be worth while to mention also, that a short prayer or thanksgiving of Christ's, in the presence of the multitude, is recorded in Matth. xi. 25. "At that time Jesus spake, and said 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that, having hidden these things from the wise and prudent, thou hast revealed them to babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.'"

And to this it may be added that the account which St. Luke ^a gives, of the occasion on which the Lord's prayer was given as a model to his disciples, evidently furnishes another instance in which he prayed in company with others. "And it came to pass that as he was praying in a certain place, when he had ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father," &c. The probability is, that Christ had been praying on this occasion in the presence of his disciples; for, had he prayed in secret, how could they have known what he had been doing? He must either have told them, or they must have gained information of it by divine revelation; neither of which suppositions is at all probable, for the former would have implied ostentation in Jesus; and the latter; that a God of all wisdom gave supernatural information in a case of little importance and from which no material benefit could result.

^a Chap. xi. 2.

However, in Matth. xviii. 19, 20, direct encouragement is clearly given to social prayer by a promise of Christ to his disciples relative to this duty. "I say unto you, that if two or three of you agree on earth concerning any thing which they shall ask in my name, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." From the whole of this passage taken together, it is manifest that one of the purposes for which Christ expected his disciples to gather together in his name, was social prayer, and by the promise which he made on this occasion he meant to give this practice all possible encouragement. This, I say, is unquestionable; for, should it be observed that in the latter of these verses no mention is made of this duty, it is obviqus to reply, In the first there is, and the two verses are inseparable. In the former, a conditional promise is given of an answer to social prayer; and in the latter, the reason for expecting the fulfilment of it. Two or three individuals, it is true, might agree to pray for any thing separately, and in private; but the latter of these verses proves that Christ is here speaking of their doing this in society, when they were gathered together in his name, and therefore for the express purpose of social prayer. And as to the smallness of the number here mentioned, this is of no consequence whatever. The least number is mentioned for no reason but because they

would have most need of encouragement. But the ground of faith and hope mentioned in the latter verse applies with equal force to a large number as to a small one, or rather with greater; for if the united prayers of two or three individuals had the promise of a favourable issue, those of many, equally unanimous, according to the purport of the passage, would have a clearer title to the fulfilment of the promise. It will be replied, of course, that this promise, like the grant of authority in the preceding verse, is to be understood as limited to the apostolic age, if not to the apostles themselves, and that therefore Christians in the present day have no concern with any thing which the passage contains. But neither is this objection of the slightest weight; for the gathering together of the followers of Christ in his name, among other purposes for social prayer, being a general duty common to all Christians in all ages, he evidently speaks of it as such, since his language clearly implies that to meet for social prayer would be the future practice of his followers generally. And though the ground of encouragement given here does apply exclusively to the period of his personal presence and the continuance of miracles among them, still it necessarily indicates approbation of meetings for social prayer in general, and is given expressly for the purpose of stimulating his followers to perseverance in this custom. If it were right in the apostles, it cannot be wrong in us, because it is a duty which has

no connexion with miracles, or with any extraordinary circumstances whatever. If Christ encouraged this practice among them, what imaginable reason can be given why it should meet with his disapprobation, when found among others? Certainly the passage before us implies the contrary.

But in what manner did the apostles themselves understand the design of their master relative to this subject? In this case they at least were competent judges; and that their conduct is decisive in favour of our argument, the proofs we have to adduce from the New Testament, leave no room for doubt. A similar remark, however, to that which has been made, relative to the extraordinary nature of the circumstances and character of our Lord, applies to them as well as to him. As his successors in the great work of propagating pure and undefiled religion in the world, they were endued with the like miraculous powers.—“As thou, O Father, hast sent me into the world,” says he, “so send I them into the world;” and to the apostles themselves, “The same works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do.” Their business was to increase the extension of Christianity in every direction; to instruct, to convince, and to persuade: and hence we should expect to read more of their public teaching, and of their labours and sufferings in this great work, than of any thing else. Such we find to be the case. Their circumstances were always extremely unsettled and precarious;

and in the midst of persecution, affliction and distress from every quarter, considerable time would elapse before Christian churches, or organized societies, could be generally formed for religious worship and instruction. In such circumstances opportunities for social prayer could never be regular, and seldom without danger of interruption. At first they appear to have frequented the Temple and the Synagogue for this purpose. But after the communication of the miraculous powers on the day of Pentecost, in spite of all opposition and discouragement, their numbers began rapidly to increase; and from the very beginning of their labours, we find decisive proofs, notwithstanding all the disadvantages of their circumstances, that meetings for religious worship, or social prayer, were among the first things that occurred. These instances are at least as numerous as could be expected, and are amply sufficient to show that they were in the habit of performing this duty with great constancy and fervour.

When they had been spectators of the ascension of their venerated Master, they returned without delay to Jerusalem, and “were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God^a.” This was at least public devotion, and no doubt social also, for such was the stated worship of this “house of prayer,” and they had no other, as yet, in which to assemble for the purpose.

In the continuation of this history by the same

^a Luke xxiv. 52, 53.

writer in the Acts^a, we are informed also, that upon the return of the disciples to Jerusalem from mount Olivet, on this occasion “they went into an upper room, where abode Peter and James, and John, and Andrew and Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued *with one accord* in prayer and supplication, with certain women also, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren.” The word here translated *with one accord* signifies *unitedly, in conjunction*, as is evident from all the other passages in which it occurs in the New Testament, which are eleven^b. The disciples, therefore, already a considerable number, continued *with one accord (unitedly, in conjunction)* in prayer and supplication. Will any one say that this was not social prayer?

We are informed immediately after, that one of the next things that occurred, was another act of social worship^c. When one hundred and twenty disciples were met together for the purpose of filling up the vacancy occasioned by the apostasy of Judas, they joined in solemn prayer to God; “and having prayed, *they* said,” in continuation of their religious services, “Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which of these two

^a Ch. i. 12—14.

^b Acts ii. 1, 46. iv. 24. v. 12. vii. 37. viii. 6. xii. 20. xv. 25. xviii. 12. xix. 29. Rom. xv. 6. See Pope's Answer to Wakefield.

^c Acts i. 24.

thou hast chosen," &c. No one, surely, will deny that this was an act of social worship. The principal prayer is omitted, and that part only is given which related immediately to the object of their meeting; and the probability is, that it was delivered by one individual (Peter, no doubt, who had just addressed the company) in the name of the rest, who concurred with him; for when it is observed in the plural number, "*they* prayed," and "*they* said," it cannot be supposed that each of them delivered his own prayer separately, for in this case no one will believe they would all have uttered the same words^a.

On the day of Pentecost^b about three thousand persons—convinced by what they saw, and by the plain facts which they knew to be true, as stated by Peter—on the spot where they had taken place, and immediately after, were added to the number of the disciples. "These all steadfastly continued in the doctrine of the apostles, and in fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."—The other acts mentioned here were social acts; and why not prayers also, like the rest? How, moreover, could it be known that they all conti-

^a It may be proper to observe, that both these instances of social prayer took place before the descent of the holy spirit, that is, before the miraculous powers were communicated to the apostles; so that there is no pretence for applying to these instances the observation that has been made respecting other cases of social prayer occurring in the New Testament, namely, that the prayers of the first Christians were "among the miraculous gifts," and on that account afford no example to us.

^b Acts ii. 42.

nued steadfast in prayer, if these prayers were entirely private? Will any one pay the slightest attention to the ridiculous supposition, that three thousand persons were guilty of the absurd ostentation of telling each other that they continued steadfast in prayers?

Soon after this ^a Peter and John, having been called before the heads of the Jewish nation, when they delivered the noble reply to their command not to preach in the name of Jesus, "Whether it be right before God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard;" returning to their own company ^b, and reporting all which the chief-priests and elders had said unto them, the whole assembly lift up their voice to God with one accord (*unitedly, in conjunction*). The prayer follows, which, being of considerable length, was delivered, no doubt, by one individual, the rest joining with them, for it can scarcely be supposed again, they would all have repeated the same form of words separately and extemporaneously, especially when the prayer was so long and of so singular a description.

^a Acts iv. 23.

^b The increase of the disciples in so short a time after the ascension was very rapid; for we are told in the preceding chapter, that when Peter had been preaching a second time to the people, though the priests, &c. had cast him and John into prison, "many of those that had heard the discourse of Peter believed: and the number of the men was about five thousand."

“O sovereign Lord, thou art God, who madest heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that is in them : who saidst also by the mouth of thy servant David, ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the people imagine vain things? Why did kings of the earth stand up, and why were the rulers gathered together against the Lord, and against his anointed?’ For in truth, against thy holy servant^a Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together in this city, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all freedom they may speak thy word; by stretching forth thy hands to heal; and by the doing of signs and wonders, through the name of thy holy servant Jesus.” Here then is another unquestionable instance of social prayer; nor is there any pretence for affirming that this was an inspired prayer, or “among the supernatural gifts,” for at the conclusion of it we are informed that, “when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were filled with the holy spirit, and spake the word of God with freedom.” So that they were supernaturally assisted to teach, but not to pray.

^a In this and the 30th verse the Greek word is the same as that which the translators of the common version have properly rendered *servant* in the 25th.

When the number of the converts was greatly multiplied in Jerusalem^a, so that the apostles found the daily distribution of alms interfered with their other duties, they called a general assembly of the disciples and directed them to choose seven deacons to superintend this business; and the disciples having chosen them, “they set them before the apostles; who, when they had prayed, put their hands on them.” This of course was social prayer. And the reason, moreover, which the apostles gave for the appointment of these officers for such a purpose was, that they themselves might continue “steadfast in prayer, and in the ministry of the word;” so that prayer is here connected with preaching, the former consequently being public as well as the latter, and both of them constituting the chief employment of the apostles.

We are afterwards informed^b, that whilst Peter was kept in prison, “earnest prayer was made by the church to God for him.” The natural and obvious sense of these words is, that the united prayers of these Christians on this occasion were offered up to God in behalf of Peter, when they were assembled together; and this signification of the passage is further confirmed by what is said in the 12th verse; “And when they had considered the matter” of Peter’s enlargement, “he came to the house of Mary,

^a Acts. vi. 1—7.

^b Acts xii. 5.

the mother of John, surnamed Mark; where *many were gathered together, and were praying.*" What could this be, if it were not social prayer? Certainly it was not closet devotion; and it manifestly shows that the former instance was social too.

In the next^a chapter we are informed, that at the time when Barnabas and Saul were separated for the ministry, "When they," that is, the other prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, "had fasted and prayed, and put their hands on them, they sent them away." The putting on of hands and praying, on this occasion, were evidently, both of them, public and social acts.

And when Paul and Barnabas, on a subsequent occasion^b, had appointed elders over the different churches which they had visited, "and had prayed and fasted, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed." The evident probability is, that this also is an instance of a similar nature.

But one of the most remarkable instances of social prayer, as practised among Christians now, is that which took place at the close of the discourse delivered by Paul to the inhabitants of Miletus, when, it is said, he kneeled down and prayed *with* them all. No preposition^c, it has been observed, could have been selected, that

^a Acts xiii. 3.

^b Ibid. xx. 36.

^c σύν.

would have conveyed the idea of union more clearly than that which is made use of here : and by these expressions every unbiassed person would immediately understand, that a prayer was delivered by Paul, in which the assembly silently joined. The meaning of such language is determined by general consent, which is here unequivocal ^a.

A similar act was also performed by the same apostle and his companion Luke, in conjunction with the Christians of Tyre ^b. “When we were departing,” says the writer, “they all conducted us on our way, with their wives and children, till we were out of the city : and we kneeled down and prayed ;” which was of course social prayer.

To these instances may be added the account which is given of what took place at Philippi ^c. “On the sabbath day,” says the historian, “we,” that is, Paul and his companion Luke, “went out of the city by a river, where prayer was wont to be made : and we sat down and spake to the women who resorted thither :” and from the 16th verse it is generally inferred that they prayed with them. It is probable, however, from the form of expression in this passage ^d, that here was a *proseuche*, in which Paul both prayed with those

^a Pope’s Answer to Wakefield.

^b Acts xxi. 5.

^c Ibid. xvi. 12.

^d It is contended that this passage ought to be rendered, “We went out of the city by a river, where according to re-

who were present, and taught them in the manner in use in the Synagogue^a.

However, should this instance be considered as equivocal, it is perfectly unnecessary. The others already adduced, are clear and satisfactory; and, if we consider the conciseness of the history in which they occur, and the extremely unsettled state of Christians at that time, they will certainly appear to be as numerous as circumstances would permit. It was immediately after the ascension of Christ that they began, or rather continued, the practice of social prayer, and nothing can be more evident than that they were afterwards constantly in the habit of using all occasions proper for this purpose as they occurred. This will further appear from the passages in the epistles that refer to the subject.

To the Corinthians^b the apostle gives directions on the subject, which prove indisputably that prayer was not confined to the closet, but that Christians were then in the habit of using it in their assemblies for religious purposes: the man whilst praying was to have his head unco-

ceived custom, or, as was allowed by law (*ἐνομιζέτο*), there was a *proseuche*. See Jennings's *Jewish Antiquities*, vol. ii. book ii. ch. ii. p. 69.

^a When the law was read, out of respect the reader stood; but when any person taught the people in the Synagogue, he sat, as Paul did on this occasion. Hence Prideaux and others think the *proseuche* here was used for religious purposes similar to those which were practised in these places of worship. See Conn. part i. book vi. page 388, the note.

^b 1 Cor. xi. 4.

vered, the woman to wear the usual covering on the head.

There is one passage, however, which can leave no doubt on the mind of any person who has not previously received the strongest bias on the subject, that social prayer in the manner now in use, that is, of one individual delivering the prayer in the name of all, and the congregation signifying their participation and concurrence by the response, Amen, was the habitual practice of Christians in general in the apostolic age^a. "Let him that speaketh in an unknown language^b, pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown language, my spirit prayeth, but my meaning is unprofitable. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit," that is, with *my* spirit, as in the preceding verse, understanding myself, "and with the understanding also," or with meaning, so as to be understood by others. "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Otherwise when thou shalt bless God with the spirit," with thy mind, understanding thyself, but not understood by others^c,

^a 1 Cor. xiv. 13, &c.

^b This does not necessarily refer to the gift of speaking different languages, given on the day of Pentecost, and which was so essential to the apostles in preaching to different nations: a foreigner might speak in a language unknown to the rest of the assembly, and it seems strange, if an individual possessed the miraculous power of speaking an unknown language, that he should not at the same time be enabled to interpret that language.

^c See Locke on the passage. This sagacious and skilful

“how shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, since he knoweth not what thou sayest? For thou indeed givest thanks well; but the other is not edified^a.” Were there no other text on the subject in the New Testament, this would be sufficient.

It is not easy to imagine a more puerile attempt to evade the proof afforded by this passage, that social prayer was the common practice of Christians in their assemblies at this time, than that which has been made by some observations on the use of the word *amen*, as if it were not intended to express a participation in the prayer at the conclusion of which it was uttered. Every one knows that *amen* is a Hebrew word, signifying *truth*, and that it is properly translated *verily* at the beginning of many of our Lord's so-

commentator, however, understands by *my spirit* in the 14th verse, the mind of the worshiper; but by *spirit* in the next verse supernatural assistance to pray in an unknown language. But what sufficient reason can there be for changing the meaning of the same word so suddenly in the same passage? The repetition of the pronoun *my* was not necessary. The signification seems to be the same here as in our Lord's expression addressed to the woman of Samaria, of worshipping God in spirit and in truth, that is, with the mind and sincerely.

^a Vitranga quotes this text, among others, in order to show that the worship of the Synagogue and of Christian assemblies was essentially the same, both including prayers, thanksgivings, and benedictions, with the responses of the people, by saying Amen. The chief difference appears to have been, that the Christians did not use forms of prayer, or read the law. Vitranga de Syn. Vet. lib. iii. pars ii. cap. xix. p. 1100.

lemn affirmations recorded in the gospels. But every one knows also that, by common consent, when it is used by those who hear, at the end of a prayer delivered in their presence, this use of it implies, not their approbation only, but their concurrence, their participation in what the speaker has uttered. That this was the ancient as well as modern sense in which it was so used, is unquestionable. The common response, says Vitringa, in the Jewish Synagogue, was *amen*; by which the whole congregation replied to the minister's prayers and benedictions; and thereby signified their concurrence with him ("suum eo consensum testatus cum precante"). He has a distinct section on this use of the word, in which he enumerates the several circumstances insisted upon by the Talmudic writers as requisite to render it acceptable to God, among which one at least was proper, namely, that it should be accompanied by a firm persuasion that God heareth prayer ^a.

St. Paul's direction to Timothy (1 Tim. ii. 1—8) has also been quoted as affording another instance in evidence that social prayer was the common practice of Christians when that epistle was written. "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in high station; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness

^a Vitringa, page 1092.

and gravity. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our saviour.—I will therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without anger and disputing.” Not only because Paul is here giving directions to Timothy how to conduct himself in reference to Christian churches; but from the nature of these exhortations, and the whole form of the expressions, these supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all men, &c. we have no doubt were intended to be made in their assemblies for religious purposes. They were altogether social in their nature, and most suitable for public worship ^a.

There is also a passage in the epistle to the Romans, (xv. 5 and 6,) which clearly alludes to social prayer as at that time practised among Christians. “Now the God of patience and comfort grant you to be of the same mind among yourselves, according to the will of Jesus Christ:

^a That such was the light in which Christians immediately succeeding the age of the apostles considered these exhortations, is evident from a passage in Tertullian, where he is giving an account of their social worship. His words are; “*Coimus in cœtum et aggregationem ut ad Deum, quasi manu factâ, precationibus ambiamus orantes. Hæc vis Deo grata est. Oramus etiam pro imperatoribus, pro ministris eorum, ac potestatibus, pro statu seculi, pro rerum quiete, pro morâ finis.*” If there be not in this last sentence a direct allusion to the words of St. Paul to Timothy, it at least describes a practice founded upon them in their public assemblies, convened expressly for social prayer with great fervour of devotion, which he speaks of as highly acceptable to God. See his *Apol.*, cap. xxxix.

that with *one consent*, and *with one mouth*, ye may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The word which is here translated *with one consent*^a, is the same which occurs in Acts i. 14, signifying *in conjunction*, and referring in all the places in which it occurs in the New Testament to social acts. So that there can be no doubt the apostle's prayer in this passage, that the Christians at Rome might be of the *same mind among themselves*, that *with one consent* (in conjunction), and *with one mouth*, they might glorify God, refers to their social worship.

There are a few other passages in the New Testament, of less importance, relative to this subject; but enough surely has been adduced to prove that social prayer is fully sanctioned by the example and instructions of Christ and his apostles, as well as by the universal practice of Christians in the apostolic age.

That social prayer is a practice to which the apostles and their converts were accustomed, is indeed so clearly and decisively proved by the passages which have been quoted, that it is difficult to conceive it possible any one should doubt the reality of this fact, after having perused them with common impartiality. There is but one method of attempting to render this evidence nugatory; and of that some notice has already been taken^b; but as it is the only reply that can be

^a ὁμοθυμαδόν. See note to page 112.

^b Page 105 and 113 note.

made, absurd as it is, it may be proper to add a few further remarks on the subject. Some persons, then, have objected that, though they admit instances of social prayer do occur in the New Testament, yet the extraordinary circumstances in which they took place, and the miracles with which they were connected, render them unfit subjects for our imitation, afford no indication of the mind of Christ, and give no sanction to social worship as a general practice; nay, others have gone so far as to affirm without hesitation, that "the prayers of the first Christians formed a part of the supernatural gifts;" which affirmation, if it mean any thing but a quibble, must signify that these prayers were themselves supernatural gifts, that is, inspired prayers. To this we reply in the first place, that the whole force of this objection applies equally to any sanction or encouragement we may derive from the exhortations and example of Christ and his apostles to zeal and exertion in our endeavours to disseminate the pure principles of Christianity, either by public teaching, by writing in their defence, or by any other method; for, if we admit the truth of their own declarations, we have no doubt that the teaching of Christ and his apostles was not only accompanied by miracles, and took place in the most extraordinary circumstances, but was itself "part of the supernatural gifts." As their commission for that purpose was divine, so their qualifications were such

as no other human being has any pretensions to. Christ spoke in the name and with the authority of God: "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; and the Father who abideth in me, he doeth the works^a. The doctrines which I teach are not mine, but his that sent me." The apostles also in like manner laid claim to divine inspiration, and delivered what they taught, not as the word of man, but as in truth the word of God^b; and Christ assured them, that the comforter, which the Father would send in his name, should teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had spoken unto them^c." And accordingly they, as well as the prophets, spoke as the spirit gave them utterance. Paul especially declared that the gospel preached by him was not according to man. "For," says he, "I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." And he says in another place, "Which things we speak also, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the holy spirit teacheth^d." Nothing can be plainer, therefore, than that the apostles lay claim to divine inspiration in preaching the gospel, and consequently that their teaching, as well as that of Christ, was among the supernatural gifts. Of course then, according to the objection just stated, the command given to them to teach what they

^a John xiv. 10.^c John xiv. 26.^b 1 Thess. ii. 13.^d Gal. i. 2.

had thus learned, and the various directions respecting this important work, belong exclusively to them; their zeal and fidelity in this undertaking afford no example to us; nor are Christians now under any obligation either to teach in any way, or to hear, the great truths of the gospel of Christ. So that in this manner we should get rid not only of social prayer, but of public teaching also, or of publishing the pure gospel, either by speaking or writing. And why not? We are told that social prayer has been introduced and upheld by crafty, designing, hypocritical, worldly, ambitious, and consequently wicked men, in order to serve their own selfish purposes, and ought therefore to be discontinued; and why should not all public teaching of the Christian religion in any way whatever be considered as introduced and continued by similar instruments, for the like unworthy purposes? and if so, why should it not, for this reason, be abolished altogether? For does it not afford the most favourable opportunity of at once blinding the understanding, and corrupting the heart, under pretence of moral and religious instruction? Nay; what reason can be given why the authority of Christianity itself in the present day should not be annihilated altogether by this notable argument? "Christianity is founded upon miracles; it was published to the world in circumstances the most extraordinary, and by the most singular means. Christianity was itself a supernatural gift;

for it was 'not the word of man, but the word of God.' Now that miracles have ceased we have nothing to do with it. It ought to have been confined to the age of miracles. If it were a revelation to others, it is no revelation to us." And thus have unbelievers argued in fact. 'The argument, however, in all these cases is alike sophistical, and serves only to show the weakness of a cause that is compelled to have recourse for support to the shadow of a reason like this. In a word, as observed before, the whole conduct of Christ and his apostles in the midst of the most painful sufferings and distresses, and their benevolent and generous exertions for the temporal and everlasting benefit of mankind, if the force of this reasoning were admitted, would entirely lose their effect as affording an example to us. According to the Scriptures, they were supernaturally assisted to endure afflictions in a manner of which we can have no expectation. Their perseverance and fortitude in the arduous and painful duties they had to perform, were in a great measure the effects of divine aid to which we can have no pretensions, or were produced by the miraculous powers which have now ceased. Notwithstanding this, however, we still say, "Christ hath left us an example" expressly for this purpose, "that we should follow his steps; and if any man say he abideth in him, he ought also to walk even as he walked." And we respect the admonition of St. Paul, "Be ye followers of me, as

I am also of Christ. Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do:" and among other things that were excellent, both in him and in his great master the saviour of the world, we have seen unequivocal instances of social prayer, as well as the most exalted benevolence, and exemplary fortitude in sufferings: nor do we consider the obligation to imitate their example, either in the one case or the other, at all impaired by the supernatural powers imparted to them by God, or by the extraordinary circumstances in which they were called to act.

To this moreover it may added, if we could see any reason for believing that the prayers of the first Christians had any thing in them supernatural, then we should say, Still they were social prayers, and therefore social prayer has the sanction of divine authority, and it is impossible that supernatural aid should have been afforded in the practice of a custom which Christ himself had discouraged and forbidden. However, we utterly deny the truth of the assertion that the prayers of the first Christians were a "part of the supernatural gifts;" and we ask for proof. Where is the passage in which any thing like this is affirmed, or from which it can be deduced with any fairness of inference? And where, moreover, was the necessity for the exercise of a miraculous power to enable them to pray? Having become Christians, had they no capacity to feel and ex-

press virtuous dispositions, and pious wishes and affections in their devout addresses to God, without assistance from heaven? Is any thing done by a God of all knowledge and wisdom in vain? Or does he interrupt the settled course of natural causes, and exert his power miraculously in cases in which there is no occasion for such interposition, or where the most important benefits to mankind are not the result?

The idea of the prayers of the first Christians being “part of the supernatural gifts” seems to have been taken up from the passage in the 14th chapter of the 1st epistle to the Corinthians, where prayers, supplications, and thanksgivings are indeed mentioned in company with the gift of speaking a foreign language^a, but in which there is not the slightest intimation that the prayers themselves, which were delivered in such language, were in any degree supernatural. It is said, verse 15th, it is true, “I will pray with the spirit^b, and I will pray with the understanding also;” but the meaning of this is, I will pray spiritually, with the use of my own understand-

^a Though there is nothing in this chapter which necessarily implies that this power was supernatural, let it be granted, for the sake of the argument, it is probable the apostle does allude to such a gift; for it was communicated on the day of Pentecost, and is enumerated among the spiritual gifts in the 12th chapter of this epistle.

^b Thus Christ observes, as remarked before, that those who worship God acceptably, must worship him *in spirit* and in truth; that is, spiritually, or with the use of the understanding, and sincerely.

ing, and so as to be understood by others. Prayer is not enumerated among the spiritual gifts in the 12th chapter, nor is it any where else mentioned as such. Let any one look through the instances of social worship that have been quoted from the New Testament, and try whether he can find any thing like a proof of this: the case, for instance, of St. Paul at Miletus, when he kneeled down as they were departing, and prayed with the company present on that occasion ;—what indication is there, in this instance, of any thing supernatural, or in any degree extraordinary, except indeed the circumstance of the prayer being delivered in the open air be considered as such? This is inconsistent with the customs of the present day; but will any person seriously urge it as a reason why the apostle's example of social prayer should not be followed in more convenient circumstances, and in places more suitable for the purpose? It will readily be granted that the first Christians might be assisted, as several passages of the New Testament seem to indicate, occasionally at least, in their prayers, by divine influence on the mind; but this applies as much to their private as to their public devotions, and may be employed against following their example equally in the one case as the other. This, however, is a very different thing from the social prayers of the first Christians being the exercise of a supernatural gift, of which there is a total want of proof. Several of the passages that

have been quoted, moreover, clearly prove that social prayer was the common and habitual practice of Christians universally in their assemblies for religious purposes in the apostolic age; and will any one be prepared to affirm that prayer was never used on these occasions without the exercise of a miraculous power? And even if in any particular instances supernatural aid can be proved to have accompanied their public devotion, still we should say, as before observed, that this circumstance increased rather than diminished the obligation to the general practice of social worship, because this was an indication that divine approbation attended the performance of this duty.

So long as the preceding passages remain in the New Testament, no further evidence can be needed, that amidst all the sufferings, hazards, and uncertainties of their state, social prayer was from the first the common practice of the apostles and their converts. They met for this purpose when and where they could; and there are also two or three passages from which it seems reasonable to conclude that they set apart the first day of the week, which they called the Lord's day, more particularly for religious duties, and no doubt, as they were so much in the habit of social worship, for this among others^a. As their numbers increased, which they did rapidly and extensively, they every where formed themselves into

^a John xx. 19, 26. Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Rev. i. 9, 10.

churches, or religious societies, regularly and judiciously organized, for the purpose of promoting the great and benevolent objects of Christianity among themselves and others whom they could convince and persuade to become partakers of its inestimable benefits. When this was the case, their meetings for religious worship and instruction became more regular and stated; and the first day of the week is more distinctly marked as the time when these services took place.

SECTION II.

The Practice of Christians immediately after the Apostolic Age.

THE preceding account of the state of social worship among the first Christians is abundantly confirmed by all the information that can be obtained relative to the period immediately succeeding the apostolic age. There are various decisive testimonies to this effect; but the most important is that of Justin Martyr, whose Apology, from which the following extract is taken, was written A. D. 140. "On the day called Sunday," says he, "there is an assembling together in one place of all who live in the cities or the country; the records of the apostles^a, or the

^a Τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων. This is no more the title of a particular book, than the "writings of the prophets" is. The "records of the apostles," or the me-

writings of the prophets, are read, as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president delivers a discourse, admonishing the people, and exhorting them to copy in their conduct the excellent things which they have heard^a. Then we all rise together and pray; and, when we have ceased praying, bread and wine and water are brought; and the president in like manner offers up prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability^b, and the people express their concurrence by saying Amen^c. Then all who are present partake of the elements, which are distributed among them and sent to the absent by the deacons.”

In the passage already quoted^d from Tertulian, who, like Justin, flourished immediately after the age of the apostles, about the year 160, we have another testimony equally decisive to the zeal and fervour with which Christians came together in crowded assemblies for the purpose of social prayer. And we may add, the celebrated letter of Pliny to Trajan affords unexceptionable evidence of the same fact, that Christians were

morale transactions, discourses, &c. recorded by them, may include not only the historical parts of the New Testament, but the epistles also; in other words, the whole of the New Testament.

^a *Πρόκλησιν τῆς τῶν καλῶν τετῶν μιμήσεως*. The idea is evidently that these Christians were exhorted to exhibit in their conduct a copy or resemblance of whatever was morally excellent or beautiful in what they had heard read.

^b *Ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ*, and consequently his prayers were extemporaneous.

^c *Apol. I. par. 87, p. 131. Ed. Oxon. 1700.*

^d See note to page 123.

in the habit of meeting together on a certain day, at that time early in the morning, through fear, no doubt, of their persecutors, for the purpose of social worship, though it was very natural for him to be mistaken concerning the object of their adoration, since he had never been present in their assemblies, and would readily consider them as practising idolatry, though in a form very different from that which he had been accustomed to witness.

Speedily after the death of the apostles, then, we have proof which no one will venture to dispute, that the followers of Christ regularly assembled, both in the cities and surrounding country, on the first day of the week, for the purpose of religious services, which consisted of reading the Scriptures, exhortations, the Lord's Supper, prayers and thanksgivings, conducted by one individual, and in which the people joined. The question therefore occurs, How came it to pass, in so short a time after the death of the apostles, some of whom it is possible at least might have been personally known to individuals then living, that social prayer had become the stated and universal practice in their religious assemblies on the first day of the week, if this custom had received no sanction from the example and instructions of the apostles, if Christ himself had expressly forbidden it, and if the first converts to his religion, who had the best means of becoming acquainted with his will on the sub-

ject, had lived in the general neglect of it? Did it spring up every where in Justin's time on a sudden? And were heathen converts especially brought over instantly to a habit so different from all they had been accustomed to, if they had no warrant for it in the new religion which they had adopted? No person surely will have credulity enough to believe this^a.

SECTION III.

The Resemblance between the religious Services in the first Christian Assemblies, and those of ancient Synagogues.

So evident is it that social worship was the

^a Nothing has been said in these pages on the subject of singing in the religious assemblies of the first Christians, or of the Synagogue, because, as it was sufficient to prove that prayer, which constitutes the chief part of public worship, was their usual and habitual practice on these occasions, it was desirable not to add unnecessarily to the length of this little work. Singing, besides, was not only a subordinate part of these services, but was less suitable to the circumstances of danger and persecution with which the first Christians were surrounded, than prayer; and for these reasons we should not expect to meet so frequently with reference in the New Testament to the practice of it among them. Notwithstanding this, however, there are several passages which are sufficient to show that singing was in common use among them, as, Matt. xxvi. 30; 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 26; Eph. v. 18, 19; Col. iii. 16; James v. 13. Singing, moreover, is in its own nature a social exercise. Few persons would be disposed to sing alone in their closets; and if the first Christians sang at all, it would be, of course, in society. After the apostolic age it is also certain that this useful and exhilarating practice was continued regularly and universally.

common practice of Christians in the apostolic age, that it has been maintained by those who have investigated the subject with the greatest care, that the Jewish Synagogue furnished the model by which their religious services, as well as the general constitution of their churches, were formed. One object of Vitrिंगa's elaborate and valuable work on the Ancient Synagogue was to prove this. And though the resemblance was certainly not designed, nothing could be more likely to take place. The great founder of the Christian religion, though he showed his approbation of social worship by his practice, and by the encouragement which he gave it, left no specific direction concerning the mode in which it should be conducted, enjoining only that it should be free from ostentation and hypocrisy, and assuring his followers that not a multitude of forms and ceremonies, but sincerity and truth alone, would render their religious services acceptable to God. The method of prayer, as well as the regulations to be adopted in their religious societies, he left, in a great measure, as matters of discretion and expediency, to be modified and determined by circumstances, as prudence and sound judgment should direct, without allowing one, or any number of individuals, in the Christian community, to assume pre-eminence over others. Having this liberty, sacred and inviolable as it ought ever to be, the first converts to his religion, guided by the powerful influence of habit, if they were constituted like other men,

would naturally be disposed to carry into their new profession whatever there might be in the mode of worship to which they had been accustomed that was consistent with the liberal and rational principles which they had adopted; and the first instruments of its propagation being Jews, who had been in the habit of attending the religious services of the Temple and the Synagogue with great regularity, they would be inclined, as a matter of course, to transfer the Jewish method of prayer and praise into their new societies, especially as their master had given them a warrant for this by his attendance upon that worship. But the Gentile Christians, having nothing in their ancient superstitions that could be substituted for them, would readily take these services as they found them among the Jewish converts, without attempting any innovations of their own, except perhaps as to the object of their worship. And accordingly, from all the sources of information relative to this subject that remain, there is every reason to believe this to have been the case. Whoever has perused Vitringa on this subject, cannot fail to be convinced that in the worship of the early Christians and that of the Synagogue, though in some instances there were considerable variations, yet, in all the most essential particulars the resemblance was singularly exact and striking. He states first the instances of correspondence between the services of the Temple and those of the Synagogue, showing from ancient Jewish writers that all the religious services of

the latter were observed in the former; such as prayer, the reading of the law, and teaching the people from the Scriptures, whilst the sacrifices, the burning of incense, and the Levitical music, belonged exclusively to the Temple. And though the mode of prayer was different, yet in both places it was social. As the worship of the Synagogue was more rational, conducted with greater simplicity, more liberal, and better adapted to general use, than that of the Temple, so the worship in use among Christians in all these respects was a still further improvement. They had no forms but the Lord's prayer, which, after the apostolic age at least, they appear frequently to have repeated in their religious assemblies. But in other instances the resemblance was preserved^a. The worship of both was equally social;

^a In his *Prolegomena*, cap. i. p. 3, is the following passage:—"In cultu templi et synagogarum occurrunt ritus quidam et ceremoniæ, iis ad omnia similes, quas in sacris nostris observare licet. Si enim animum advertamus ad lectionem legis, psalmodiam, conciones, preces, benedictiones, aliosque sacros, constat utique, eos non minus apud veteres Judæos quam nunc apud Christianos usu receptos fuisse. Quod qui attenta mente considerat, quid illi magis in proclivi est quam cogitare de communi horum sacrorum origine?"

"In Templo et Synagogis fuerunt sacrarum rerum præfecti et ministri ratione officiorum, (imo et nominum,) cum iis comparandi, qui in ecclesiis præsident iisque ministeria exhibent. Quapropter jure quæritur, quæ sit hujus convenientiæ ratio, aut esse possit?"

"Præcipuam hic meretur animadversionem, quod non tantum officiales et consuetudines sacrorum conventuum Christianorum et Judaicorum plurimis partibus inter se consentiunt, sed quod ipsi Scriptores sacri ecclesiam Christianorum ejusque præfectos, ministros et consuetudines iisdem subinde nomini-

consisting of prayers, thanksgivings and benedictions, delivered by one in the name of the rest; and it is acknowledged by all, says Vitringa^a, that the church received from the Synagogue the response, Amen, to the prayer pronounced by the person who conducted these services. He also remarks, it merits attention, that not only do the offices and customs of the Christians and Jewish assemblies for public worship agree in most particulars, but the sacred writers themselves make use of the same names and phrases by which to distinguish the different ministers of the Christian church, and to describe the duties of their respective offices, as those by which the ancient as well as modern Jews were accustomed to designate their religious ceremonies and the officers who presided over them. Both in the Synagogue and the Christian church we have pastors, teachers, wise men, elders, presidents or overseers, rulers, leaders, angels^b of the church, and deacons; and

bus, vocibus, et phrasibus, exprimant, quibus Judæi suas personas et ceremonias sacras, vel olim designare soliti sunt, vel nunc etiam hodieque designant," &c. Then follows his enumeration of the officers of both services, and the duties attached to their stations, which so exactly correspond. In his *Prolegomena* he enumerates the points of resemblance between the Hebrew and Christian mode of worship, as well as the constitution of their religious societies, and the body of his work is employed in adducing the proofs.

^a Lib. iii. pars 3. cap. xix. p. 1100.

^b This appellation was given, as observed before, to the minister of the Synagogue who recited the prayers in the name of the people, and to the Israelites of the station in the Temple, who were always present there at the time of the daily sacrifices to offer up their prayers in the name of the people; but

the duties which they performed, or superintended, were thanksgivings, benedictions, reading, interpretation, teaching, exhortation, feeding the church, singing, and prayer with the response, Amen. And he adds, what appears to be a remarkable coincidence, the precepts which the teachers of the Jews give respecting the duties required of the various officers of the Synagogue scarcely differ in the slightest degree from those which the apostle Paul delivers in cases of a similar kind in the Christian church^a.

it is also applied in the Scriptures to the priests and Levites. See Deut. xxx. 13; Mal. iii. 7. So likewise we read of the angels of the seven churches (Rev. ii. 1, 8, 12, &c.), who were the overseers, the presidents, or ministers of those churches. For notices of the other officers see also the following passages:—Pastors, Eph. iv. 11. Teachers, Rom. xii. 7; 1 Col. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11; Heb. xiii. 7. Wise men, 1 Cor. vi. 5, xii. 28. Elders, Acts xiv. 22, xv. 2, 22, xx. 17, xxi. 18; 1 Tim. v. 1, 17; Titus i. 5; 1 Pet. v. 1; James v. 14. Overseers, or bishops, who were elders, Acts xx. 17, &c.; 1 Tim. iii. 1; Phil. i. 1; Titus i. 6. Rulers, or leaders, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 1 Tim. v. 17; Heb. xiii. 7, 17; Rom. xv. 14, xii. 7, 8; 1 Cor. xii. 28. Deacons, Acts vi. 1, 2, &c.; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 4.

^a Christian churches were also sometimes called Synagogues, as in James ii. 2: "If these come into your *assembly*," &c. the original is *synagogue*. As the Jewish synagogues were used for holding courts of justice, especially upon ecclesiastical affairs, as well as for public worship, Dr. Whitby and Dr. Jennings (see his *Jewish Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 64) think that it is to this use of them St. James alludes here. But this is in the highest degree improbable; for the apostle is addressing Christians, and not Jews; nor can any thing be plainer from the whole passage, than that he is here speaking of Christian and not of Jewish places of worship. It is also highly probable, that the ancient synagogues themselves, when the Jews that assembled in them became Christians, were used as places of Christian worship.

Such then are the important and essential points of resemblance between the worship of the Synagogue and of the early Christian churches, as well as their general constitution, proved to have existed by a writer to whose competency to form a correct judgement in this case, by his thorough investigation of the subject, united to profound erudition and persevering industry, few persons now, if any, will pretend. It may well be inquired, therefore, Whence did all these instances of similarity originate? In the imitation of the Christians by the Jews? As well might it be expected that the inhabitants of Greenland should voluntarily clothe themselves in the dress of the equatorial regions. Certainly the bitter hatred which the Jews from the first have always borne the Christian name, and every thing belonging to it, would lead them to stand as far aloof as possible from any customs that had resemblance to Christian innovation, and Christian peculiarities. This inveterate and implacable enmity was introduced even into their prayers; for they had one by which they devoted all Christians to destruction, and which they were accustomed to repeat every sabbath in their synagogues. But at the same time when Jews, by the powerful operation of the miraculous evidence of the truth of Christianity, became converts, a change which was fitly compared to a new birth, still, from habit and strong predilection for their ancient customs, they would inevitably be inclined to introduce as

much of their former modes of worship into their new profession as was not inconsistent with its requisitions; whilst converts from Paganism, under the mild and benevolent influence of Christian principles, would have no prejudices against this worship to encounter, as they had nothing of a similar kind to substitute in its room. It would have been strange had it been otherwise. And accordingly we find from the epistles of Paul, that such was in reality the fact; for so strong were the ancient prejudices of the converts from Judaism, that one of the greatest difficulties he had to encounter was to convince them that the observance of the Mosaic rites was not essential to the enjoyment of Christian privileges; though on the subject of social worship he says nothing discouraging to the practice of it; for this was not peculiar to the Mosaic institute, and had he done so, his own practice would have been liable to the censure. Hence therefore the resemblance between the worship of the Synagogue and that of the first Christians is such as might have been reasonably expected, and of the reality of it there can be no doubt.

THE sum of the whole, then, is this:—That the advocates for social prayer have as much right as its opponents to express their convictions on this, or any other religious topic, without being liable to suspicion or to insult, is unquestionable;

nor can any purpose be served by abuse and scurrility, but to injure the cause which they may be intended to support. Their conviction therefore is, that public worship or social prayer is sanctioned in the clearest manner by reason, since it is perfectly congenial with the social nature of man; with his best feelings, propensities, and wishes, together with the circumstances in which he is placed, which all connect him with society, as well as with the relation in which he stands to his Creator, whose bounties he shares and whose favours he needs in common with the rest of his species. Were his nature solitary, like that of some of the brute creation, we should then say, Let him bury himself, like them, in retirement, and in nothing seek communion with others: but so long as his dispositions, his wants, and his situation in the world, connect him inseparably with others, his religious duties, as well as the rest, become social; nor can any thing be more proper and becoming than the general offering of humble prayer and praise to the general benefactor. The religious and moral benefits of such a practice we consider as most important. It contributes perhaps more than any thing else to the influence of religious principle on society at large; and whilst it gives strength to the habits of private devotion, it has a direct tendency to cherish and increase a spirit of benevolence and sympathy with others, especially in their sufferings; an advantage which

prayer in the closet does not possess in an equal degree. All the charities of life are the proper fruits of general association in rendering homage to the beneficent Father of the human race ; nor is it credible that any one who habitually joins with others in the practice of this duty, should be totally insensible to the additional obligation under which he is laid thereby to abstain from whatever would bring discredit on his Christian profession. We readily admit that it is liable to be perverted and misapplied. As it is a powerful instrument of good, so is it of evil also, though in an inferior degree ; for the best things are subject to the greatest abuse. But this is equally true of public teaching in any way, as well as of every other religious and moral duty ; and if we are to reject any practice, because it has been abused and perverted to evil purposes, we shall retain nothing that is excellent and good. To argue against public worship appears to us to be opposing the best interests,—the morals, the civilization, the good order of society, the present and eternal welfare of mankind. The dispute seems to resolve itself into the question, Whether religion be the friend or enemy of man : and as we have no doubt that religion is of the first importance to his welfare, inasmuch as it is the best and only sure foundation of universal virtue, we are of opinion that the efforts of the opponents of social worship are aimed, and aimed only, at what is most valuable to the human race. Hence this

duty has the sanction of antiquity, as well as of all modern practice among Christians. The Hebrews, from the infancy of their nation, were accustomed to it. Prayer was a companion of sacrifice. It formed a part of their worship in the Temple, the whole of which was public and social. From the Temple it was transferred to the Synagogue, where, as there was no sacrifice, it formed the chief part of their religious services, and was offered in a form the most social that can be devised. These services Christ himself and his apostles regularly attended, and by this means at least expressed their approbation of social worship in some form or other, leaving the use of liturgies or free prayer to the discretion and judgement of the worshiper. Besides this, instances are mentioned in the gospels, in which Christ on other occasions prayed in society, and there are some in which his approbation of this custom is implied. Various passages have also been quoted, which prove that social prayer was the common and habitual practice of the apostles and first Christians in general; and from the unexceptionable testimony of the earliest and most respectable writers immediately succeeding the apostolic age, it is also indisputable that in their time this custom universally prevailed in the Christian churches. The manner in which it was conducted bore a striking resemblance to that of the Synagogue, which shows its origin to have been from thence. From that time to this it has

continued to be the uniform practice of Christians of all parties, however opposite in other instances their opinions, and whatever may have been their animosities. It has therefore the clear sanction of the religion we profess, not less than of reason. It has grown with the growth of Christianity ; has accompanied with equal steps its progress through the civilized world ; and so long as this pure and benevolent system of faith and practice shall retain its hold on the minds of mankind, we have no fear of its decline. To endeavour to root it out from society, or perceptibly diminish the numbers that attend upon it, is an attempt as idle and fruitless as shooting straws against a rock, or trying to overturn a mountain with a lever.

A P P E N D I X.

No. 1.

AS the Mishnah and Talmudical writers have been mentioned in the preceding Treatise, the following account of both may be acceptable to readers who have not had an opportunity of attending to these subjects.

The Mishnah arose out of the following circumstances : The Jews had a tradition that Moses just before his death delivered to the people, not only thirteen copies of the written law, but numerous interpretations of it, which they called the *oral law* ; and which they said was delivered down with great care by Joshua to the elders that followed him, who delivered

it again to the prophets, till it came at length to Ezra and the members of the great Synagogue, &c. But the truth of the matter is, says Prideaux, that after the death of Simon the Just, 292 years before Christ, there arose a sort of men called the Mishnecal Doctors, who made it their business to study and descant upon those traditions which had been received and allowed by Ezra and the men of the great Synagogue, and who drew inferences of consequence from them, all which they had ingrafted into the body of their ancient traditions, as if they had been as authentic as the others; which example being followed by those who succeeded them in this profession, they continually added their own imaginations to what they had received from those who went before them, whereby these traditions became like a great snow-ball,—the further they rolled from one generation to another, the more they gathered, and the greater the bulk of them grew. And thus it went on to the middle of the second century after Christ, when Antoninus Pius governed the Roman empire; by which time they found it necessary to put all these traditions into writing, for they were grown so numerous that it became no longer possible for the human memory to retain them. This work was assigned to, and executed by, Rabbi Judah, called Hakkadash, that is *holy*, who was then rector of their school at Tiberias in Galilee, and president of the Sanhedrim which sat at that place. He undertook and compiled this work in six books, each consisting of several tracts, in all sixty-three; and in which, under proper heads, was arranged all that had been delivered to them of their law and their religion by their ancestors. This is the book called the Mishnah. This book has always been held in the highest veneration by the Jews, as of equal or even superior authority to the Scriptures. It immediately became the study of all their learned men; and the chief of them, both in Judea and Babylonia, employed themselves in making comments upon it; and these comments, together with the Mishnah itself, make up both the Talmuds; that is, the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmud. The comments they call the Gamara, that is, the Complement. The Jerusalem Talmud was completed about the year of our Lord 300, and is published in one large folio. The Babylonian Talmud was published about 200 years afterwards, in the beginning of the sixth century. The last edition, published at Amsterdam, is in twelve folios. This latter is that which is chiefly followed by them, on

account of the obscurity of the other. These are the most ancient books the Jews have, except the Chaldee Paraphrase of Onkelos and Jonathan, written about the year 145, and both of them in the language and style of Judea. Out of the Babylonian Talmud Maimonides has made an abstract, containing only the resolutions and determinations made therein on every case, without the descants, disputes, fables, and other trash, under which they lay buried in a load of rubbish. This is one of the completest digests of the law ever made; and for this and other of his writings, he is deservedly esteemed the best writer among them. Prideaux's *Connexion*, part i. book v. p. 325. We are justified, therefore, in saying that the Mishnah, having been compiled about the year of Christ, 150,—though containing a collection of absurd and fabulous traditions,—in a matter of fact, like that of the antiquity of the 18 prayers, is sufficient authority. And if these prayers were old established forms about 120 years after the death of Christ, there can be no doubt of their being in use during his life.

No. 2.

THE following translation of the prayer "Cadish" may also be acceptable to the English reader.

Let his great name be magnified and hallowed in the world which he hath created according to his own good pleasure, and may he cause his kingdom to rule. May his redemption flourish, and may his Messiah suddenly come, and deliver his people in your life and in your days, and in the life of all the house of Israel, and that very speedily. And say ye, Amen, Amen, let his great name be blessed for ever and ever. Let his name be celebrated, and his memorial exalted perpetually, and to all eternity. Celebrated, praised, honoured, exalted, lifted up, revered, extolled, and proclaimed be the name of the Holy and Blessed One, far above all blessing, and singing, and praise, and gratulation, that are used in the world. And say ye, Amen. Receive our prayers with mercy and favour. Let the prayers and desires of all Israel be accepted before their Father who is in heaven; and say ye, Amen. Let the name of the Lord be blessed from this time even for ever. Let great peace from heaven, and life, be upon us and upon Israel; and say ye, Amen.

O M I S S I O N S.

THE following passages were omitted in their proper place ; but, as they are very much to the purpose, they are inserted here. They should have been added to the note ending on page 134.

In the preceding paragraph (LXXXVI) indeed there is an explanation of Justin's meaning ; for he says, "The apostles in the records written by them, (*ἐν τοῖς γενομένοις ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἀπομνημονεύμασι,*) which are called the Gospels, have informed us that Jesus, when he had taken the bread, and given thanks, commanded them, saying, Do this in remembrance of me," &c. With these gospels he was well acquainted ; for he makes many quotations from them in the former part of his work.

In the paragraph preceding this (LXXXV), moreover, the account which he gives of the manner in which converts were received into the Christian community, affords another instance in proof of the perfectly social nature of their religious worship. "Having been baptized, the new believer," he observes, "is introduced to the Christian brethren where they are gathered together to offer up their united prayers (*κοινὰς εὐχὰς,*)" &c. When these prayers are finished, the Lord's supper is administered, at which the president again offers prayers and thanksgivings, in which the people, he says, signify their concurrence by saying Amen. And he adds "Now *Amen*, in the Hebrew dialect, is used to signify *So be it* (*τὸ γενόιτο σημαίνει*):"—an unanswerable proof, if any were needed, that this word was used by the first Christians at the end of prayers, in the same sense as at present, and that nothing could be more strictly social than their mode of worship.

Page 61, line 4, after "Prideaux" add "and Vitringa," and strike out s from the end of "endeavours."

THE END.

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